■ WORLD / A7

Roof collapses in Poland hall, kills 60; death toll seen rising

■ BUSINESS / B1

Private firms less optimistic on '06 growth, says poll

Do you have a story to tell about Edsa I? The INQUIRER is looking for those untold stories (photos, too) that contributed, no matter how small, to the first People Power in 1986 that so stunned the world and inspired and emboldened people in chains everywhere to break free. The contributions that will be selected by the editors will be used for the INQUIRER's special celebration of the 20th anniversary of Edsa I. Send your contribution, with your address and contact number, not later than Feb. 15 to fdelmundo@inquirer.com.ph

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, January 30, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 53 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Part of Iraq rehab funds gambled away in RP

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—IRAQI money gambled away in the Philippines. Thousands spent on a swimming pool that was never used. An elevator repaired so poorly that it crashed, killing people.

A US government audit found American-led occupation authorities squandered tens of millions of dollars that were supposed to be used to rebuild Iraq through undocumented spending

PART/A18

10,800 pupils brush teeth in bid for Guinness record

BRUSH, RINSE, SMILE!

About 10,800 schoolchildren brushed their teeth yesterday at Rizal Park in an attempt to break the world record for a simultaneous brush-off and to make Filipinos aware of proper

10,800 PUPILS/ A18

ITO ANG RECORD-BREAKING SMILE!

AT A GLANCE

KEY points in the two pastoral statements issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines yesterday:

- Search for truth in "Hello Garci" controversy should be "relentlessly pursued."
- 2007 elections should not be cancelled.
- Comelec should be transformed into a reliable body and calls for resignation or prosecution of commissioners should not be brushed aside.
- Oppose hasty change in Constitution. Any amendments should be done by a constitutional convention, not by a constituent assembly.
- Repudiate any extraconstitutional means in resolving political crisis.
- Repeal Mining Act of 1995, recall all approved mining concessions, and disapprove all pending applications.
- Deletion of nationalist provisions in Charter can pave way for "wholesale plunder" of national patrimony.

Truth on Garci must be pursued–CBCP

Bishops oppose 'No-El' proposal

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE language, influential Filipino bishops yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to pursue relentlessly the truth behind the "Hello Garci" controversy and to stop moves to call off elections next year.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines said the CBCP had observed a "failure of political processes to make public servants accountable," citing the "acts of evasion and obstruction" in the Virgilio Garcillano wiretapping.

"We recommend that the search for truth be relentlessly pursued through structures and processes mandated by law and the Constitution," the bishops said in one of two pastoral statements issued at the close of a three-day plenary in Manila's Pope Pius XII Center.

"They did not really pursue the truth," said newly elected CBCP president Angel Lagdameo at a news conference, referring to the killing of the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo by her majority allies in the House of Representatives in September last year. "They stopped at technicalities."

The impeachment attempt was triggered by the release last June of wiretapped phone conversations purportedly between Garcillano, a former election commissioner, and Ms Arroyo. Opposition politicians said the recordings were evidence Ms Arroyo manipulated the 2004 presidential election.

Saying the President was acknowledging the CBCP state-

TRUTH/ A17

CBCP calls for mining law repeal

By Christian V. Esguerra

DECLARING THAT THE "MINING Act destroys life," the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday called for the repeal of the law that opened up the mining industry to foreign firms.

In a statement delivered after a national conference, the CBCP reiterated its request to President Macapagal-Arroyo "to recall all approved mining concessions and to disapprove pending applications."

The bishops said "adverse social impacts" would far outweigh a boom in the mining industry.

They said it was the people's basic right to tap natural resources and allowing big mining companies access to these "amounts to violating their right to life."

"Furthermore, mining threatens people's health and environmental safety through the wanton dumping of waste and tailings in rivers and seas," the CBCP said in the statement read by Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes.

The CBCP also expressed alarm over the deletion of the nationalist provisions in the Constitution being pushed by the Malacañang-formed Consultative Commission.

If it succeeds, the move could "pave the way (for) the wholesale plunder of our national patrimony and undermine our sovereignty," the bishops said.

It was the strongest statement of the bishops against mining un-

CBCP/ A17

AS CHINESE New Year revelry continues into the night, a crowd watches a display of Chinese fireworks outside the Temple of Taoism in Malate, Manila. RAFFY LERMA

IT IS the "Year of the Militant Dog" for members of Anakpawis during a protest on the UP campus in Diliman, Quezon City. They predict the downfall of the Arroyo administration amid deepening poverty following the imposition of the expanded value-added tax and Charter change. RAFFY LERMA

Plaza Miranda tragedy revisits Liberal Party

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

TRAGIC IRONIES MOCKED THE Liberal Party when it celebrated on Jan. 19 the 60th anniversary of its founding in the Great Schism of the Nacionalista Party that ended the NP's monopoly of power since the Commonwealth days of President Manuel L. Quezon (1935-42).

The rupture grew out of the decision of Sen. Manuel A. Roxas to challenge President Sergio Osmeña in the April 1946 presidential election as the country stood on the edge of regaining its independence in post-World War II.

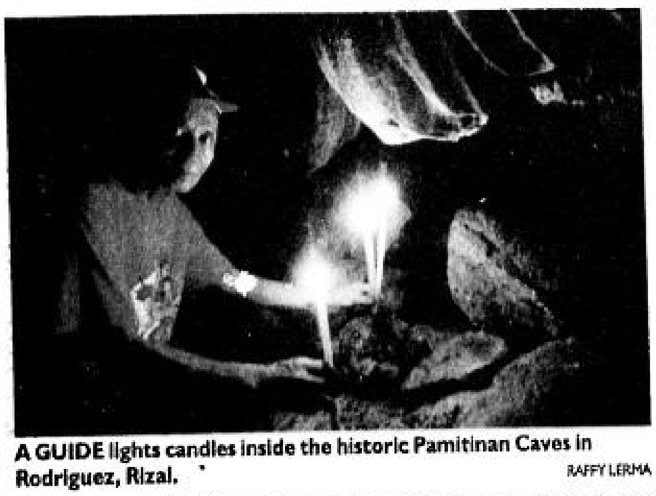
At the time, the monolithic NP, which had dominated Philippine politics from 1935 to 1946 under the Quezon-Osmeña duumvirate, had become too crowded at the top, cracking up from the rivalry between Osmeña and Roxas.

The great split defined the shape of Philippine politics for four decades—until the grenade bombing of the LP rally at Plaza Miranda on Aug. 21, 1971 that nearly wiped out the LP leadership.

Today, the LP is as overcrowded at the top as the NP was in 1946,

PLAZA/ A18

'Moral recovery' fight launched in caves



A GUIDE lights candles inside the historic Pamitinan Caves in Rodriguez, Rizal. RAFFY LERMA

By Volt Contreras

RODRIGUEZ, RIZAL—ANDRES BONIFACIO and about a dozen other Katipuneros were on a mission to free the Filipino people from colonial bondage when, on Good Friday of 1895, they made an arduous climb to the Pamitinan Caves here and performed rituals consecrating their upcoming revolt against Spain.

Last week, the caves saw the launch of a modern-day battle that Bonifacio and his men would recognize as just as important if they were alive today—the pursuit of a "moral recovery" in the government service.

Composed of volunteers from various public agencies, a nongovernment organi-

MORAL/ A17

AFP not buying lawyer's line on Faeldon meeting

By Luige A. del Puerto

A WOMAN OFFICER ARRESTED WITH FUGItive Capt. Nicanor Faeldon tried to give investigators the impression that her superiors knew she was seeing him on the sly, but the military was not buying the line, a top Armed Forces officer said yesterday.

"That seems to be her defense," said the senior officer, referring to Capt. Candelaria Rivas who was nabbed with Faeldon in a car in Malabon on Friday night.

Rivas was said to be the girlfriend of Faeldon, who had been the object of a nationwide manhunt since he escaped from military detention on Dec. 14.

Faeldon was disguised as a woman in a wig at the time, but his captors grabbed the fake hair and confirmed it was their quarry, the senior officer told the INQUIRER.

After his capture, Faeldon blamed himself for having been "careless," his lawyer said.

A lawyer, Rivas is a member of the team from the Armed Forces Judge Advocate General's Office (Jago) prosecuting the cases against Faeldon and nearly 100 other junior officers involved in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

The fall of Faeldon, with Rivas as a bonus to boot, was hailed by Malacañang as a major accomplishment, but Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said it was not yet time to relax.

AFP NOT BUYING/ A18

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/01/30/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Traders score customs inaction vs smugglers

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE LIST SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN. Apparently exasperated, businessmen are asking why not one of those on the Bureau of Customs list of the country's most notorious smugglers has been charged in court more than a year after the list was submitted to Malacañang and the Senate.

The Federation of Philippine Industries, whose members are hard hit by the unabated smuggling in the country, has urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to direct the BOC to explain its actions since submitting the smugglers list in 2004.

"We want to know how many on the list have been charged in court or those that have been dropped for lack of evidence. We believe it is incumbent upon the BOC to announce these names if any have been charged," said FPI president Jesus Arranza, the private sector representative to the government-led anti-smuggling task force.

Since 2004, the BOC has undergone three changes in leadership—from George Jereos to Alberto Lina to Alexander Arevalo to Napoleon Morales. The revenue agency faltered miserably in jacking up collections last year which fell P9.5 billion short of its P151.2 billion target. The BOC blamed the decline in the lower volume of incoming goods although overall imports have been on the rise, according to Arranza.

P100-B lost yearly

FPI estimated that the government was losing roughly P100 billion a year due to smuggling based on a comparison of data between the International Monetary Fund (which said $45 billion worth of goods was shipped to the country in 2000) and the BOC (which claimed that only $32 billion in imports entered that year).

In October 2004, the BOC submitted to the President a confidential watch list of "suspected customs offenders" amid mounting pressure on the government to curb smuggling of industrial and agricultural goods.

Senate criticism

The same list was submitted a few months later to the Senate which criticized the document not only for lack of deeper intelligence work to back up the report but also for the conspicuous absence of the names of known smugglers.

The FPI called for an update on the actions taken on the smugglers' list amid fresh concerns over the BOC's failure to stem the influx of smuggled goods through the country's numerous ports.

Arranza's call comes on the heels of renewed calls for the BOC to clamp down on smuggling and the ongoing Senate probe into the alleged links of smugglers to Malacañang.

Ignorance

Senators had earlier identified some of the alleged smugglers as David Tan, Samuel Lee, Lucio Co, Basilio Tan and Johnny Trajano. Tan is allegedly close to a Cabinet official.

During a Senate hearing on the customs budget for 2006, newly appointed Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales was chastised after he feigned ignorance about big-time smugglers such as Lucio Co who was on the 2004 smugglers' list and the siblings Vicky and Tomas Toh who have allegedly been facilitating imports in behalf of a certain Sammy Lee, according to INQUIRER columnist Ramon Tulfo. Vicky Toh has been linked to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo as alleged in the Jose Pidal exposé of Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Top importers

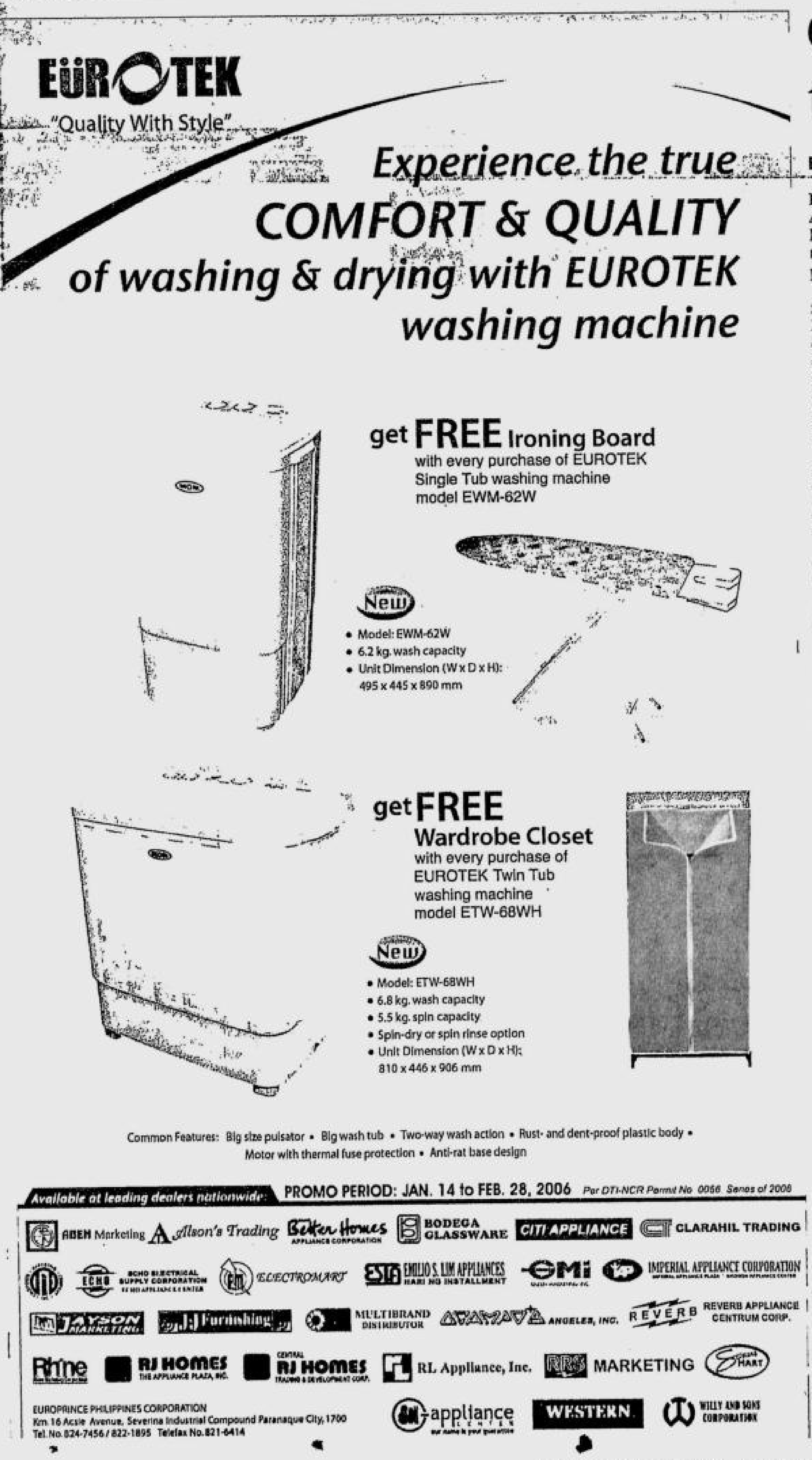
Aside from the smugglers list, the FPI also called on the BOC to reveal the list of the top 500 importers who use the "green lanes" and "super green lanes" and their corresponding payments of duties and taxes over the last two years.

These are special access lanes given to select importers to facilitate the release of their goods.

Arranza said opening their books would enable the public to ascertain whether they had paid the right amount of taxes.

HALA BIRA! LYN RILLON

Spirited dancing, frenetic foot stomping and hypnotic drumbeating – this is the Dinagyang Festival celebrated every fourth weekend of January in Iloilo City. The spectacle commemorates the Christianization of the Filipino and honors the Holy Child Jesus.



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Centrist Democrats vow to 'make poverty history'

By Michael Lim Ubac

PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM EUROPE AND Asia identifying themselves as being at the political center yesterday committed themselves to achieving peace by winning the fight against poverty and opposing extremism in their midst.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, presiding over the first meeting of the newly formed Centrist Democrat International (CDI) in the Asia-Pacific, said that members reject "every type of extremist politics in favor of the politics of consultation, compromise and consensus, as he declared the Philippines a "centrist nation" and the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats coalition a "centrist party."

In pledging to "make poverty history," delegates adopted the debt-for-equity program which De Venecia proposed and the Asian financial architecture outlined by Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart of Thailand.

De Venecia was elected the first president of the Asia Pacific unit of the CDI, which was formally established during opening ceremonies on Friday.

The political parties representing the ruling powers of Europe and Asia agreed that "sustained development must be both socially inclusive and flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances."

They also pledged to enhance the delivery of justice, respect human rights and the rights of children and women, advance Asian integration to realize a "continent without dividing lines," and to build enduring peace.

Previously called Christian Democratic International, CDI is composed of 110 political parties from around the world. In Europe, the Centrist Democrats have formed the European People's Party, currently the majority party in the European Parliament. It is pushing hard to spread its centrist philosophy to the East.

The Philippines' ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and eight other political parties in Asia are leading the expansion.

De Venecia outlined 10 major "political principles" that should guide Asian nations in their efforts to establish a "truly transnational regional party."

He said that the principles could be translated into a broad range of action programs aimed at bringing together the forces of extremism and excessive fundamentalism with the forces of moderation, creating opportunities to build an Asian middle class to reduce gaps between rich and the poor, and finding common ground between capitalism and socialism.

The Speaker said the political principles were submitted for consideration by the founding parties of the CDI-Asia-Pacific and the CDI's 110 political parties worldwide.

Before the closing ceremonies yesterday, Pier Ferdinando Casini, the head of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, took over as the new CDI international president, succeeding former Prime Minister of Spain Jose Maria Aznar.

Bird census key to monitoring disease, say bird watchers

By Blanche Rivera and David Hayes

FIRST, YOU MUST COUNT THE BIRDS.

While the government should be commended for its zeal in buying medicines and preparing hospitals in case the avian flu hits the Philippines, a serious bird census must first be conducted.

"You must know where the birds are, what species, their numbers—you can monitor any deaths or decreases in the [bird] population," Michael Lu, president of the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"But the people conducting the surveys are not adequately trained and equipped in bird identification, resulting in poor data gathering and misidentification of species," Lu noted.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is tasked with collecting data for the Asian Waterbird Census, part of a global survey of waterbirds held annually in the second and third weeks of January.

The DENR, with its limited bird watching experience and restrained resources, is unable to accurately monitor the number of migratory birds in the country, casting doubt on the credibility of data which the Philippines submitted to Malaysia for the Asian Waterbird Census.

For instance, during a recent bird census at the Candaba Swamp in Pampanga—one of more than 20 critical sites identified by the government for monitoring in its national anti-avian flu campaign—Wild Bird Club members identified 35 species and saw 11,000 birds. The DENR saw only 10 species and about 7,000 birds.

Lu said their club members turned up better-equipped than the DENR—both in knowledge and resources—to record data for the Asian Waterbird Census.

"We had more equipment than the government and we were doing it for free," Lu said.

The Wild Bird Club of the Philippines was established in July 2003 to promote bird-watching as a hobby. It has 150 members, who contributed data to the survey based on their observations in Manila, Cebu and Pampanga. The club conducts monthly guided trips for the general public.

Carlo Custodio, national coordinator of the Asian Waterbird Census for the Philippines, admitted that lack of funding resulted in discrepancies in the DENR data.

He said individual field offices often did not have enough funds to train people and to pay for transportation to monitor the resting areas of migratory birds.

"Field personnel sometimes choose sites that are easier to monitor, such as those close to their offices," Custodio said.

The DENR recorded a total of 111,371 birds at 55 monitoring sites across the Philippines for the Asian Waterbird Census last year.

The survey has been conducted in the Philippines since 1989 and coincides with mid-winter in the region, a period when migratory birds are less active and can be more accurately counted.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Gov't set to launch 'jueteng' substitute

By Jerry E. Esplanada

DESPITE ITS FAILURE TO TAKE OFF AND replace "jueteng" in the late 1980s, the Small Town Lottery or STL will be relaunched by the Arroyo administration as the "best legal substitute" for the illegal numbers game.

But this time, the STL, which is similar to jueteng, will be operated by local government units under the supervision of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, according to anti-jueteng czar Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn.

The PCSO board approved the STL's revival last month.

"The STL revival is definitely a positive development. LGUs in the entire Luzon area have been looking forward to it. Lottery guidelines and other details are being finalized by PCSO," Hagedorn told the INQUIRER over the weekend.

LGUs are expected to conduct at least three lotteries daily where bets will be placed on two numbers between 1 and 38.

Portions of the game proceeds will go to LGUs in 31 Luzon provinces, the Department of Health-attached PCSO and the Philippine National Police, among other beneficiaries.

The STL, which the administration of President Corazon Aquino ran from 1987 to 1990, failed to eradicate the decades-old jueteng after it ended up being a "front" for jueteng operators and the "cash cow" of corrupt local government officials and law enforcers.

A House of Representatives inquiry in the early '90s showed that due to lax monitoring, jueteng still flourished because STL franchises were awarded to the same people behind jueteng.

Hagedorn said "this time, it will be the same STL but minus the game's imperfections."

"It's also good news for the *kubradors* (bet collectors) and *kabos* (supervisors), the experts of the game, who will get their old jobs back. Their employment will now have the benefit of legitimacy," Hagedorn said.

Hagedorn, who also chairs the 117-member League of Cities of the Philippines, proposed the creation of a Cabinet cluster (to be headed by the Executive Secretary) to monitor the reintroduction of STL.

But Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, an anti-jueteng advocate, had earlier dismissed STL as a "shameful substitute" for jueteng.

"Something must be wrong somewhere in this situation. There is the official drive to get rid of one form of gambling only to introduce another," Cruz had said in a statement.

Noli to fly to OFW's aid in Kuwait

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO WILL lead a high-level Philippine delegation to Kuwait in a bid to save the life of Marilou Ranario, the Filipino domestic sentenced to death by a Kuwaiti court.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye did not say when De Castro and the delegation would leave for Kuwait, saying only their departure would come "shortly."

"VP Noli is also expected to hand-carry a letter of appeal from the President [Macapagal-Arroyo] to Kuwait's emir," Bunye said in his weekly "View from the Palace" newspaper column.

Accompanying the Vice President will be Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, Dr. Bernardino Vicente, chief of the National Center for Mental Health, and Dr. Edison Galindez, a forensic psychiatrist, also of the NCMH, Bunye said.

The delegation is expected to coordinate with Ranario's Kuwaiti lawyer, who is handling the appeal of her case.

"The President understands the pressure and pain that her family is experiencing right now and she would like to assure them that the government will do everything it can in order to help Marilou," Bunye said.

A Kuwaiti court sentenced Ranario, a native of Surigao del Sur and mother of two, to death by hanging after finding her guilty of killing her employer who had heaped insults on the Filipino people.

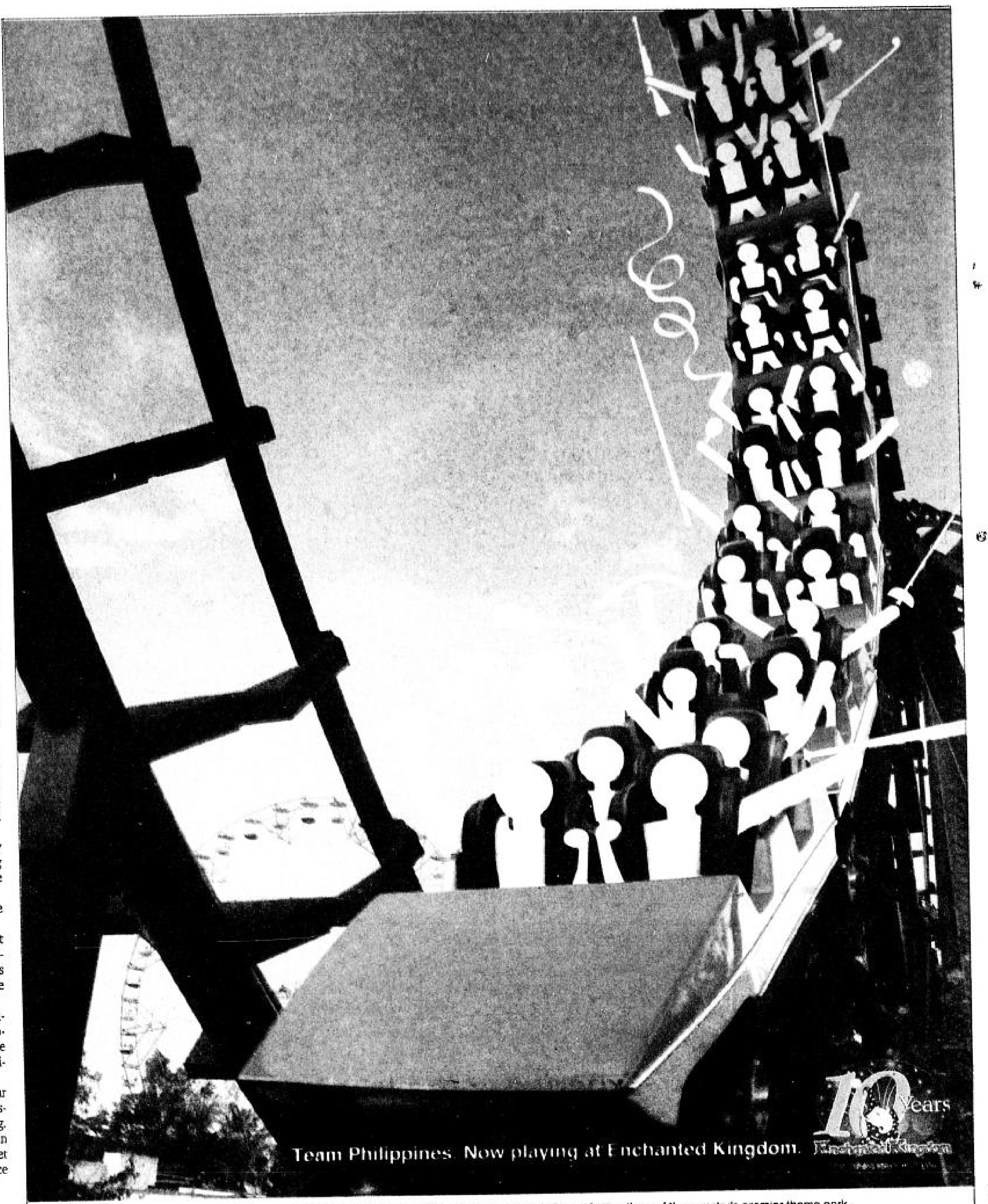
Aside from providing Ranario with legal assistance, the government through diplomatic channels has been trying to convince the victim's family to accept "blood money" in exchange for the Filipino's freedom. *Christine O. Avendaño*

I. J. Lina; 25

IVY JOYCE L. LINA, DAUGHTER OF ENGINEER Octavio "Bing" Lina and Velma Lina, passed away on Jan. 27 at the age of 25.

Ivy Joyce is also survived by her siblings Ivy Gayle, Gladys Pearl and Niño Don. Her father, Bing, is the assistant general manager for operations of the Manila International Airport Authority.

Her remains lie at the Don Bosco Chapel, Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City. Interment will be on Feb. 2 at Heritage Park in Fort Bonifacio following the 8 a.m. Mass at Don Bosco.



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8:00PM - Performance by Rivermaya
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38"	Hips	35"
23"	Thighs	19.75"
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$6-M air quality monitoring project goes pffftt!

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT'S $6-MILLION air quality monitoring project remains hazy as the American firm contracted for the job failed to install machines that could detect the presence of toxic gases in the air.

Emissions Technologies Inc., whose head office is in Washington D.C., has yet to fulfill its contractual obligations despite having received some $3.2 million (P168 million) for the upgrade of 10 ambient air quality monitoring stations in Luzon.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources awarded the contract to ETI and its local partner, Industramach Resources Inc. (ETI-IMACH), in November 2002 under the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program (MMAQISDP).

The $6-million (P315.3 million) funding for the project was secured through a loan by the Philippine government from the Asian Development Bank.

The contract requires ETI-IMACH to improve existing machines which measure pollutants like carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide and set up a system that will measure the levels of benzene, toulene and xylene (BTX)—toxic pollutants coming mostly from vehicles and household appliances.

Three inspections and evaluations by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) last year, however, showed that the contractor had either installed equipment different from that stipulated in the contract or could not make the installed devices work.

"The BTX units installed by ETI are incapable of ambient air quality measurements per ETI experiments. ETI should refund the payment of BTX units since it failed to make (the units) operational after three years from installation," Celso Siador Jr., EMB air quality monitoring section chief, said in a report to project director Luciano Hornilla.

The BTX units cost the government $990,000 (P46.8 million). These were supposed to detect and measure the volume of BTX in the air.

Benzene is a volatile organic compound produced by the combustion of petrol in vehicle engines and is known to cause cancer.

Toulene is a solvent added to gasoline to produce benzene. Chronic inhalation or exposure of humans to toulene could cause sore throat, dizziness, headaches and developmental problems in children.

Xylene is a colorless sweet-smelling liquid naturally occurring in petroleum and coal tar. It is flammable and used as a solvent in printing, as well as in the rubber and leather industries.

"[It is] very hard to accept that we paid this much while the equipment is not operational or not giving reliable data. Non-performance of all BTX units... shows that ETI continuously violates its contractual obligations," the EMB said in a 21-page report.

World Bank decision on Naia 3 out in 6-8 months – Romulo

IT WILL BE A WHILE BEFORE the arbitration case filed by a German firm against the Philippine government before the World Bank over the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 project will be resolved, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said.

"I have been informed that it may take anywhere from six to eight months before a decision is handed down by the arbitration panel," Romulo said in a statement released Friday.

Fraport AG of Germany, which owns 30 percent of the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. (Piatco), the consortium that built the terminal, had demanded $425 million from the government as compensation for its investments in Naia 3 and brought its case before the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) based in Washington D.C.

Piatco is 60 percent owned by the Cheng family, 30 percent by Fraport, and 10 percent by Nissho Iwai Corp. of Japan.

The Supreme Court nullified Piatco's contract with the government in May 2003. In December 2004, a lower court issued a writ of possession in favor of the government.

In December 2005, the Supreme Court gave the government the go-signal to take over Naia Terminal 3 when it affirmed the decision of the lower court requirihg the government to pay P3 billion to Piatco.

"I share the hope of the Philippine government legal team that the ICSID will come up with a fair and just decision on the matter," Romulo said.

He said that while he deferred to the Office of Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo "in terms of the official assessment of the Philippines' presentation at the arbitration proceedings, in my personal estimation, the government's position was clearly and ably presented by our legal team headed by Solicitor General Benipayo, Justice Florentino Feliciano and Washington-based counsel from the firm of White and Case."

Romulo, along with Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr., Presidential Adviser for Strategic Projects Gloria Tan-Climaco and Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, appeared before a three-man panel of the ICSID on Jan. 13.

Romulo testified in his capacity as the Executive Secretary when the government took control of Naia 3 from Piatco.

Despite the pending case before ICSID, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) has said it aims to make the mothballed airport facility operational by March 31.

The Miaa has launched a countdown "to rally" airport staff and employees towards the day, a senior Miaa official told the INQUIRER in a previous interview.

The Miaa has begun testing equipment at Naia 3, which has the capability to handle 28 aircraft at once and 13 million passengers a year. *Nikko Dizon*

UP fraternity sets ruby celebration

THE GAMMA SIGMA PI FRATERNITY of the University of the Philippines will celebrate its 40th or ruby anniversary on Feb. 11 on the UP Diliman campus with the theme "Balik Tambayan, Balik Pamantasan."

A Harurot Fun Run/Walk around the UP oval at 7 a.m. will kick off the festivities. A fellowship dinner will cap the whole-day event at the Treehouse-ISSI where alumni both in the Philippines and abroad will be recognized.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, January 30, 2006
4th Week in Ordinary Time

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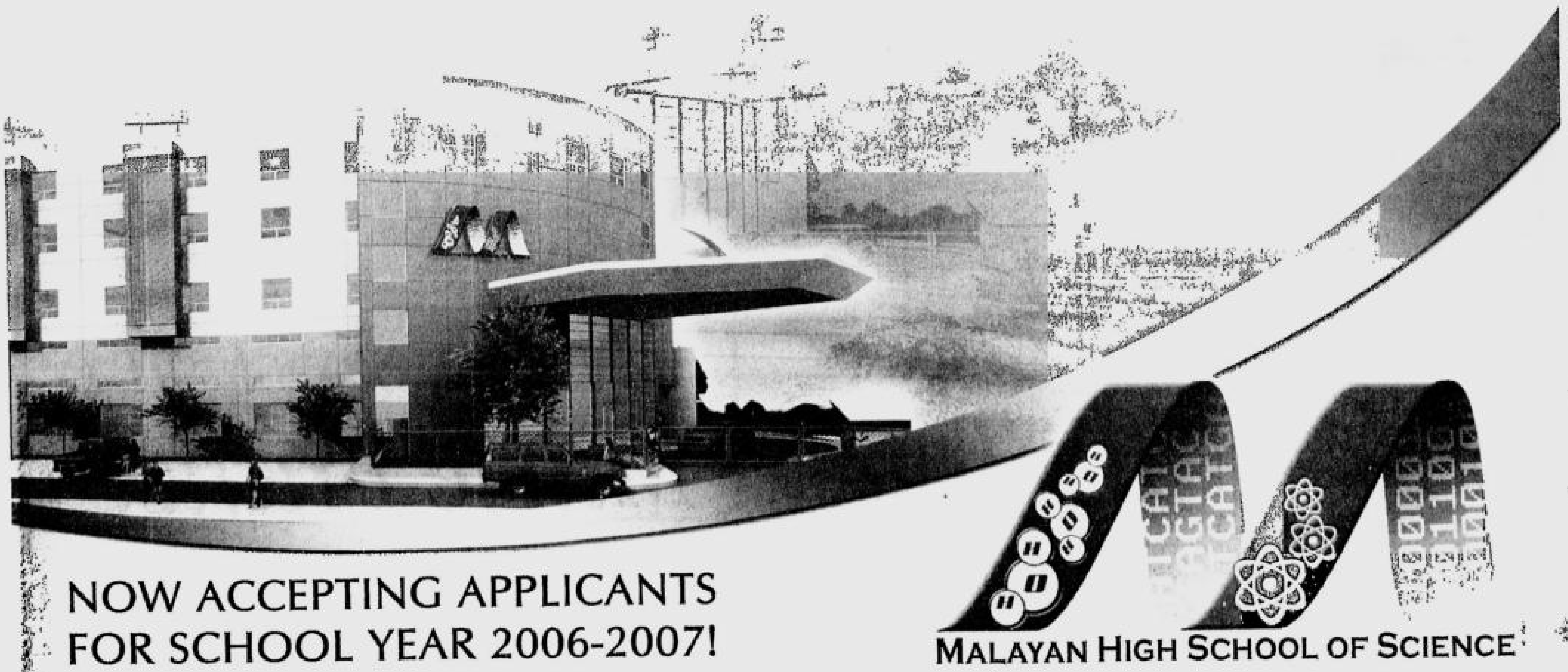

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Mandarin will be offered as an optional subject.

$6-M air quality monitoring project goes pffftt!

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT'S $6-MILlion air quality monitoring project remains hazy as the American firm contracted for the job failed to install machines that could detect the presence of toxic gases in the air.

Emissions Technologies Inc., whose head office is in Washington D.C., has yet to fulfill its contractual obligations despite having received some $3.2 million (P168 million) for the upgrade of 10 ambient air quality monitoring stations in Luzon.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources awarded the contract to ETI and its local partner, Industramach Resources Inc. (ETI-IMACH), in November 2002 under the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program (MMAQISDP).

The $6-million (P315.3 million) funding for the project was secured through a loan by the Philippine government from the Asian Development Bank.

The contract requires ETI-IMACH to improve existing machines which measure pollutants like carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide and set up a system that will measure the levels of benzene, toulene and xylene (BTX)—toxic pollutants coming mostly from vehicles and household appliances.

Three inspections and evaluations by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) last year, however, showed that the contractor had either installed equipment different from that stipulated in the contract or could not make the installed devices work.

"The BTX units installed by ETI are incapable of ambient air quality measurements per ETI experiments. ETI should refund the payment of BTX units since it failed to make (the units) operational after three years from installation," Celso Siador Jr., EMB air quality monitoring section chief, said in a report to project director Luciano Hornilla.

The BTX units cost the government $990,000 (P46.8 million). These were supposed to detect and measure the volume of BTX in the air.

Benzene is a volatile organic compound produced by the combustion of petrol in vehicle engines and is known to cause cancer.

Toulene is a solvent added to gasoline to produce benzene. Chronic inhalation or exposure of humans to toulene could cause sore throat, dizziness, headaches and developmental problems in children.

Xylene is a colorless sweet-smelling liquid naturally occurring in petroleum and coal tar. It is flammable and used as a solvent in printing, as well as in the rubber and leather industries.

"[It is] very hard to accept that we paid this much while the equipment is not operational or not giving reliable data. Non-performance of all BTX units... shows that ETI continuously violates its contractual obligations," the EMB said in a 21-page report.

World Bank decision on Naia 3 out in 6-8 months – Romulo

IT WILL BE A WHILE BEFORE the arbitration case filed by a German firm against the Philippine government before the World Bank over the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3 project will be resolved, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said.

"I have been informed that it may take anywhere from six to eight months before a decision is handed down by the arbitration panel," Romulo said in a statement released Friday.

Fraport AG of Germany, which owns 30 percent of the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. (Piatco), the consortium that built the terminal, had demanded $425 million from the government as compensation for its investments in Naia 3 and brought its case before the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) based in Washington D.C.

Piatco is 60 percent owned by the Cheng family, 30 percent by Fraport, and 10 percent by Nissho Iwai Corp. of Japan.

The Supreme Court nullified Piatco's contract with the government in May 2003. In December 2004, a lower court issued a writ of possession in favor of the government.

In December 2005, the Supreme Court gave the government the go-signal to take over Naia Terminal 3 when it affirmed the decision of the lower court requirihg the government to pay P3 billion to Piatco.

"I share the hope of the Philippine government legal team that the ICSID will come up with a fair and just decision on the matter," Romulo said.

He said that while he deferred to the Office of Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo "in terms of the official assessment of the Philippines' presentation at the arbitration proceedings, in my personal estimation, the government's position was clearly and ably presented by our legal team headed by Solicitor General Benipayo, Justice Florentino Feliciano and Washington-based counsel from the firm of White and Case."

Romulo, along with Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr., Presidential Adviser for Strategic Projects Gloria Tan-Climaco and Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, appeared before a three-man panel of the ICSID on Jan. 13.

Romulo testified in his capacity as the Executive Secretary when the government took control of Naia 3 from Piatco.

Despite the pending case before ICSID, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) has said it aims to make the mothballed airport facility operational by March 31.

The Miaa has launched a countdown "to rally" airport staff and employees towards the day, a senior Miaa official told the INQUIRER in a previous interview.

The Miaa has begun testing equipment at Naia 3, which has the capability to handle 28 aircraft at once and 13 million passengers a year. *Nikko Dizon*

UP fraternity sets ruby celebration

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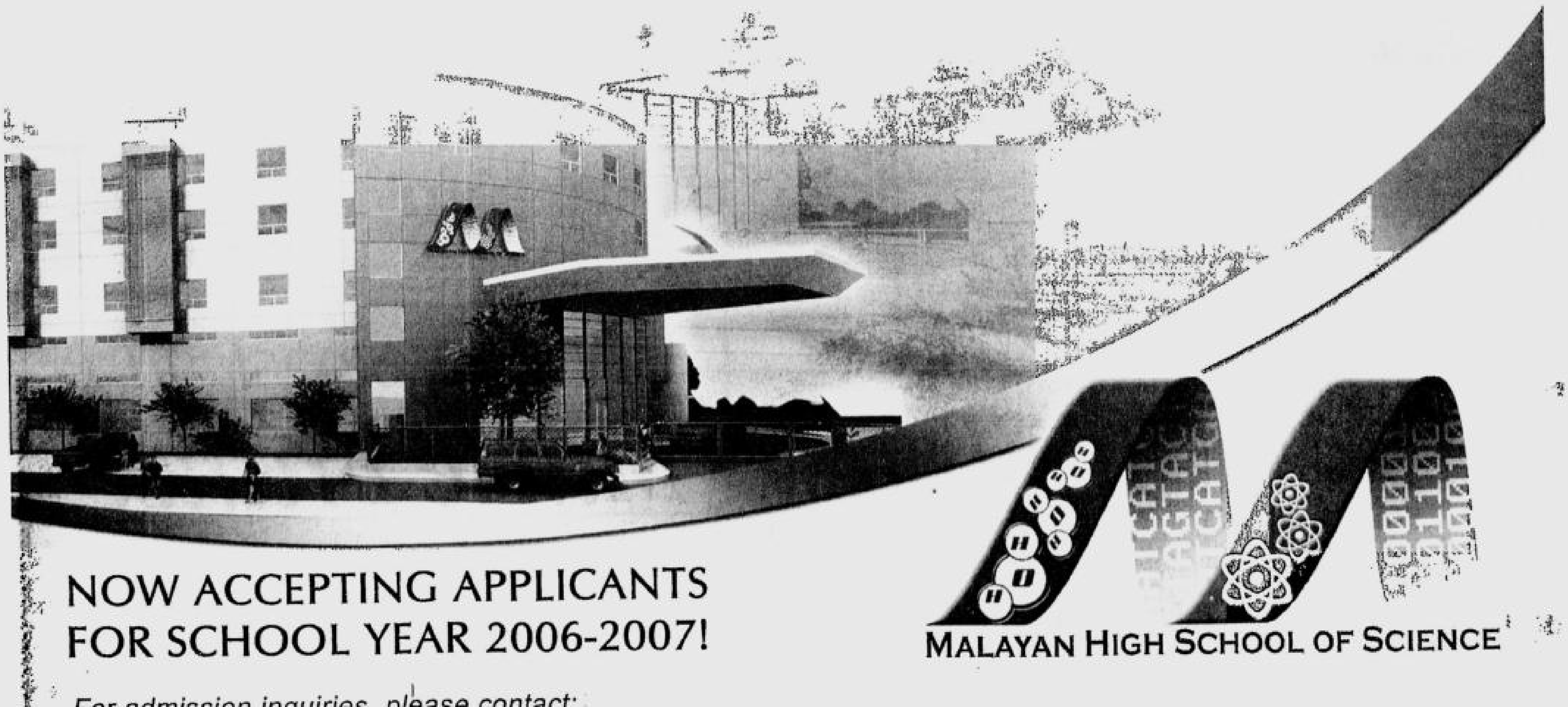
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English won't ease RP's woes —militants

PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH WOULD NOT ensure the country's economic progress, militant workers said Friday as they denounced calls for the restoration of English as the medium of instruction in schools.

"Just because citizens from rich countries like South Korea want to learn English here doesn't necessarily mean that learning English will translate into economic salvation for us," Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran said in a statement in English.

Beltran was reacting to the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines' backing of the call of the Department of Labor and Employment, the Makati Business Club and the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce of the Philippines for a return to English as the medium of instruction so that more Filipinos could be hired as call center agents and medical transcribers.

Another militant labor leader, Fernando Hicap of the fisherfolk group Pamalakaya, said the moderate TUCP's call signified "false hopes and acts of puppetry and class betrayal to the cause of our working people, nothing more, nothing less."

"This is the kind of colonial orientation and leadership that would [turn] this country into a colony of English-speaking modern day slaves," he said.

Beltran said the proposal incorrectly assumed that poor English communication skills was the major cause of the economic problems of the country today when the real cause was "the depression of the economy due to foreign plunder and proforeign and antipeople policies."

He pointed out that advanced countries like Japan and South Korea emphasized educational instruction in their mother tongues.

"Economic growth for these countries did not begin with learning English, but with building a strong domestic economy and national industries first and foremost," he said.

Beltran said the government's education policy should be directed toward honing Filipinos' critical thinking skills.

"We should train our labor force to be productive and active shapers of society, not merely [be] appendages to foreign demands," he said. "Otherwise, we'll just be creating another generation of American parrots."

Many literacy studies, according to him, concluded that the best way to teach a second language was by enabling the students to master their mother tongue to the point of critical thinking.

These skills can then be transferred to the second language, he said. *Jerome Aning*

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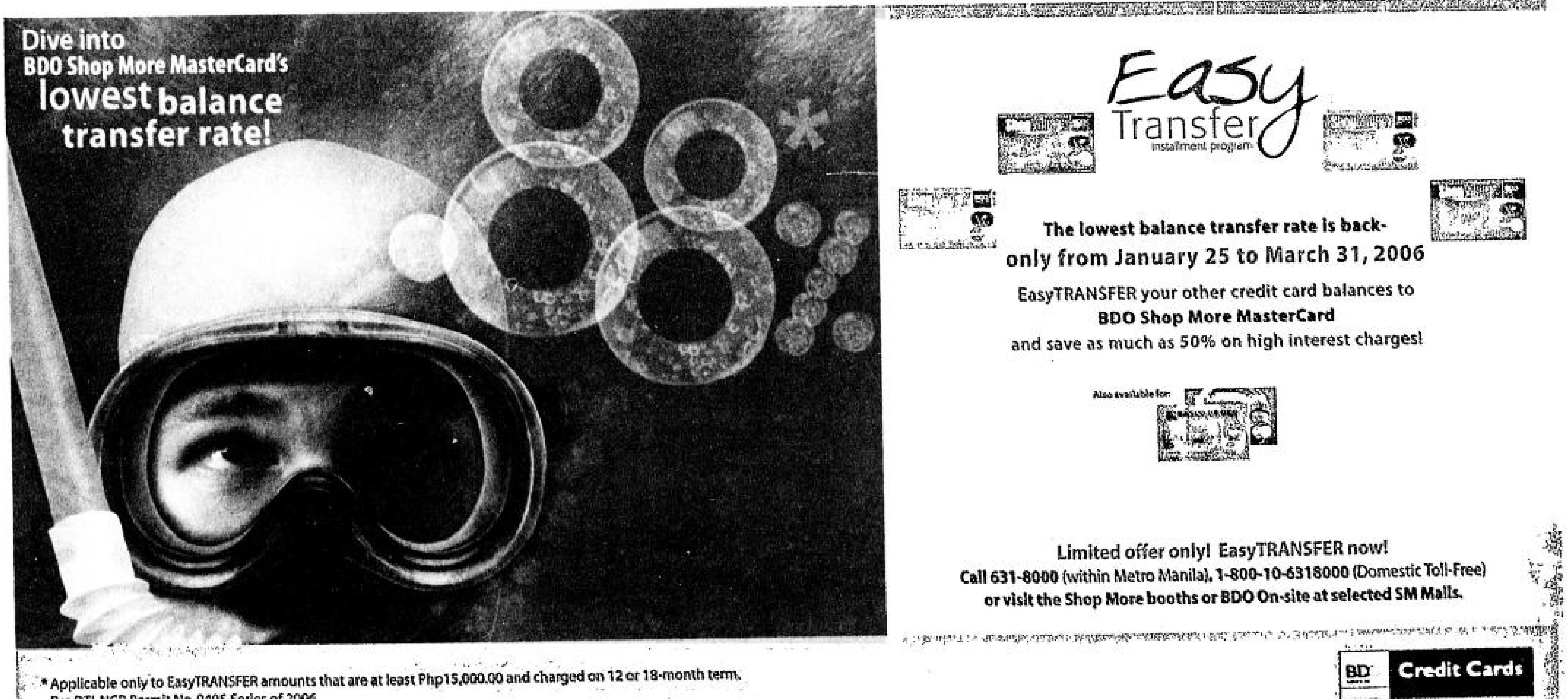
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(see B2, page 3)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER No. 01
Series of 2006

SUBJECT : SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF APPROVED STOCK DISTRIBUTION OPTION (SDO) PLANS

I. PREFATORY STATEMENT

Section 31 of RA No. 6657 provides the legal basis for the corporate landowners to avail themselves of the stock distribution option (SDO) in which corporations that voluntarily divest themselves of a portion of their capital stock, equity or participation in favor of their workers and other qualified beneficiaries can be considered as a form of compliance under the provisions of said Act. In view thereof, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) issued Administrative Order (AO) No. 10, Series of 1988, entitled: "Guidelines and Procedures for Corporate Landowners Desiring to Avail Themselves of the Stock Distribution Plan Under Section 31 of RA 6657 and Superseding DAR Administrative Order No. 4' 87 (sic)".

There are 14 corporations whose SDO plans have been approved by the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC), one of which, however, has opted to offer its property under Voluntary Offer to Sell (VOS) scheme for CARP coverage. Thus, it leaves to 13 the total number of approved SDO plans for monitoring by the DAR involving 7,703 hectares of private agricultural lands.

Over the past years, some issues have been raised as regards the non-compliance by some corporations with the terms and conditions stipulated in the approved SDO plans and Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) signed between the beneficiaries and the corporation. Relative thereto, some petitions/protests were received by the DAR from concerned groups of farmworkers seeking for the revocation of the approved SDO plans.

Hence, this Administrative Order is being issued, as a supplement to AO 10, Series of 1988, to provide the procedures and mechanisms for the regular monitoring of the corporation on the terms and conditions set forth in the approved SDO plans and the MOA, periodic audit of books of the corporation [Section 31 (a), RA No. 6657], election of the beneficiaries' representatives to the corporation's Board of Directors (BOD) [Section 31 (b), RA No. 6657] and transfer of shares of stock [Section 31 (d), RA No. 6657]. In lieu of the issuance and revocation of Certificate of Compliance (Sections 11 -12, AO No. 10, Series of 1988), this AO establishes the procedures to be observed in the disposition and resolution of complaints/protests on reported violations of the SDO plans and MOA.

II. GOVERNING POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

A. Viability and Profitability of the Corporation's Operations

The continued operation of the corporation under the SDO scheme, with its agricultural land intact and unfragmented, should show viability and profitability such that the distribution of shares of stocks would result to increased income and greater benefits for the beneficiaries than if the lands were distributed to them individually or collectively.

B. Features and Transferability of the Shares of Stock

1. Any shares acquired by the workers and beneficiaries shall have the same rights and features as all other shares [Section 31 (c), RA No. 6657].
2. Any transfer of shares of stocks by the original beneficiaries shall be void *ab initio* unless said transaction is in favor of a qualified and registered beneficiary within the same corporation [Section 31 (d), RA No. 6657]. Such transfer of shares of stocks should be in accordance with the provisions set forth under Item VII of this AO.
3. The beneficiaries do not lose their rights and privileges as stockholders of the corporation even if they have retired, are incapacitated, or are separated from the service unless they opted to sell their shares of stocks.

C. Right of First Refusal

1. The beneficiaries shall have the right of first refusal over the unsubscribed capital stock in the same proportion of the par value of their shares to the total par value of the outstanding shares of stock.
2. The beneficiaries, if they so decide, may opt to immediately exercise their right of first refusal by subscribing for the proportionate number of shares, thus, affording them the preemptive right over such shares.
3. In the event that the BOD decides to call the subscriptions and/or issue additional shares in order to raise funds, the beneficiaries shall have 60 days or within a period specified in the MOA to make the payment for their subscribed shares.

D. Representation in the Board of Directors

1. Irrespective of the value of their equity in the corporation or association, the beneficiaries shall be assured of at least one (1) representative in the board of directors, or in a management or executive committee, if one exists, of the corporation or association [Section 31 (b), RA No. 6657].
2. The representative/s to the BOD shall be elected by the majority of the beneficiaries, through secret balloting, which shall be administered in accordance with the procedures set forth under Item VIII of this AO.
3. The representative/s to the BOD shall have a tenure of one (1) year pursuant to the provisions of the Corporation Code. He/she can be re-nominated to the BOD as long as the beneficiaries elect him/her to the post.
4. As part of his/their duties and responsibilities, the representative/s to the BOD shall render/submit reports to the officers of the association/cooperative or to the General Assembly of the beneficiaries to apprise them on the salient points of discussion and resolutions passed in the Board's meetings.

E. Organization of the Beneficiaries

The DAR Provincial Office (DARPO)-Beneficiaries Development Coordination Division (BDCD) and DAR Municipal Office (DARMO), in coordination with other agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs), shall provide technical assistance to the beneficiaries in the formation of their association or cooperative, as may be requested by these beneficiaries, to help them in the various aspects of organizational development and strengthening.

F. Audit of Books of the Corporation

1. The books of the corporation shall be the subject of an annual audit by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), both chosen by the beneficiaries and the corporation. In the event, however, of disagreement between them as to the selection of the CPA, the choice of the beneficiaries shall prevail.

   The consent of the beneficiaries on the selection of the CPA shall be made either through a Resolution passed by the Board of Directors of the beneficiaries' cooperative, officers of the association of the beneficiaries or through a Resolution signed by the majority of the beneficiaries.
2. In case there is a need for a special audit, as may be determined by the majority of the beneficiaries, it shall be conducted by a CPA solely chosen by them. However, it shall not be undertaken more than once a year.
3. In the aforementioned situations, the professional services to be rendered by the CPA shall be charged against the expenses of the corporation.

G. Ocular Inspection

The DAR shall, from time to time, conduct ocular inspection of the landholding, including the improvements made thereon, to validate the information submitted by the corporation, as well as, to determine the extent of its development and use thereby ensuring that the subject landholding is being devoted for the purpose for which the SDO plan was approved

H. Filing of Protest/Petition for the Revocation of the Approved SDO Plan and MOA

1. Only the beneficiaries, through the officers of their cooperative or association, are authorized to file a petition/protest for the possible revocation of the SDO plan/MOA. A Resolution shall be passed and signed by the majority of the beneficiaries to authorize the majority members of the Board of Directors of their cooperative or officers of their association for the filing of the said petition before the PARO. For this purpose, majority shall mean to be 50 percent plus one (50% + 1) of the qualified beneficiaries. Only upon satisfying these requirements that the said petition can be accepted for disposition in accordance with the procedures set forth in this AO.
2. In the process of investigation and disposition of the foregoing protest, the corporation must be accorded with due process.

I. Allocation and Distribution of Homelots

1. As may be stipulated in the SDO plan/MOA, the corporation shall commit to distribute portions of the landholding, with good road access, to qualified beneficiaries as homelots. The size of the homelots and the responsibility for the conduct of subdivision survey and titling of the same shall be based on the agreement reached between the corporation and the beneficiaries.
2. In case the beneficiaries sell/transfer his/her shares of stock or the revocation of the approved SDO plan has been decided with finality, the ownership of the homelots and any improvements made thereon shall be governed by the MOA or related documents which conveyed the same to the beneficiaries.

III. COVERAGE

This AO shall cover all SDO plans approved by the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Approved SDO Plan refers to the plan approved by the PARC which provides in detail the manner on how the corporation shall implement (a) the distribution of stocks to the beneficiaries, (b) the distribution of annual dividends, production and profit shares, homelots and other benefits to the beneficiaries, as appropriate; (c) the continued employment of the beneficiaries in the corporation, among others.

Arbitration means a voluntary dispute resolution process in which one or more arbitrators, appointed in accordance with the agreement of the parties, or rules promulgated pursuant to RA No. 9285 ("An Act to Institutionalize the Use of Alternative Dispute Resolution System in the Philippines and to Establish the Office for Alternative Dispute Resolution, and for Other Purposes"), resolve a dispute by rendering an award

Equity is the beneficiaries' proportionate share (ownership interest) in the corporation's total capital stock.

Farmworker is a natural person who renders services for value as an employee or laborer in an agricultural enterprise or farm regardless of whether his compensation is paid on a daily, weekly, monthly, or "*pakyaw*" basis. The term includes an individual whose work has ceased as a consequence of, or in connection with, a pending agrarian dispute and who has not obtained a substantially equivalent and regular farm employment [Section 3 (g), RA No. 6657].

Financial Ratios are indicators of the corporation's financial performance which are used to analyze its present and anticipated trends with those of past periods, with those of comparable firms or with the industry as a whole.

Homelot is a parcel of land used by a beneficiary as the site of his/her permanent dwelling, including the area utilized for raising vegetables, poultry, pigs and other animals. The area of the homelot depends on the agreement between the beneficiaries and the corporation.

Impact Evaluation is an activity designed to assess the possible impact of the approved SDO plan on the development objectives of the CARP and, specifically, its net impact on the socio-economic welfare of the beneficiaries.

Income Statement Analysis is a comparative analysis of sales/incomes over several years or months.

Intra-Corporate Controversy is a controversy arising out of intra-corporate relations between and among stockholders, members or between any or all of them.

Masterlist of Beneficiaries refers to the list which contains the names of the original beneficiaries, as well as, those beneficiaries who will be qualified under this AO.

Memorandum of Agreement refers to the document stipulating the terms and conditions, as contained in the approved SDO plan, that binds the beneficiaries and the corporation in the implementation of the said MOA.

Original Beneficiary refers to the beneficiary who was actually employed and included in the list of beneficiaries at the time the SDO plan of the corporation was approved by the PARC.

Potential Beneficiary is a person presently employed in the corporation either on a regular or seasonal basis and being considered as a substitute to the beneficiary.

Regular Farmworker refers to a natural person who is employed on a permanent basis by an agricultural enterprise or farm [Section 3 (h), RA No. 6657].

Seasonal Farmworker is a natural person who is employed on a recurrent, periodic or intermittent basis by an agricultural enterprise or farm, whether as a permanent or a non-permanent laborer, such as "*dumaan*", "*sacada*" and the like [Section 3 (i)], RA No 6657]

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF APPROVED SDO PLANS AND MEMORANDA OF AGREEMENT

The process flow in the monitoring and evaluation of approved SDO plans and MOA is shown in Annex A.

A. Implementing Mechanisms

The monitoring and evaluation of approved SDO plans shall be the main responsibility of the DARPO and DAR Regional Office (DARRO). The concerned DAR Regional Director (RD) and the Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer (PARO) are, therefore, authorized to constitute their respective Task Forces on SDO (TFS), the composition of which shall include representatives from the Legal Division, Operations Division, Support Services Division/BDCD, and from other division/unit as may be determined by the DAR RD and PARO. However, the MARO/s of the municipality/ies where the landholding is located, shall be a member of the DARPO-TFS. In addition, both Task Forces should have at least one member who is technically knowledgeable in conducting financial analysis of the corporation's financial reports. The Heads of the DARPO-TFS and DARRO-TFS shall be chosen by the PARO and the RD, respectively.

At the DAR Central Office (DARCO), a Task Force on SDO (DARCO-TFS) shall also be constituted to serve as the counterpart of the DARRO-TFS/DARPO-TFS and shall be responsible in the evaluation of reports submitted by the said field offices. The DARCO-TFS shall be composed of the Undersecretary for Field Operations as Chairman with the Directors of Bureau of Land Acquisition and Distribution (BLAD), Policy Research and Strategic Service (PSRS), Bureau of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development (BARBD), Planning Service, PARC Secretariat, Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance (BALA) and Internal Audit Service (IAS) as members. The Chairman is authorized to constitute a Technical Working Group (TWG), which will also be headed by Field Operations, to provide technical and administrative support to the DARCO-TFS.

These entities shall have the following functions:

1. **DAR Provincial Office-Task Force on SDO** shall:
   - a. Ensure the timely submission by the corporation of its regular reports (e.g., semi-annual and annual reports) which will be the major bases for determining the compliance of the corporation in its SDO implementation;
   - b. Conduct thorough evaluation of the semi-annual and annual reports submitted by the corporation and validate these reports, including the status of the beneficiaries, through ocular and/or field inspection;
   - c. Conduct screening, validation and selection of potential beneficiaries, in accordance with the procedures herein prescribed (Item VII), who may be qualified as substitute to the beneficiaries;
   - d. Conduct preliminary investigation on the petitions/protests filed by the concerned party on the alleged violations by the corporation in the implementation of its SDO plan and submit its findings and recommendations to the PARO for his/her endorsement of same to the Regional Director; and
   - e. Perform related functions as may be assigned by the higher authorities of DAR.

   The Provincial Agrarian Reform Coordinating Committee (PARCCOM), as part of its mandated functions, may validate the results of the monitoring undertaken by the DARPO-TFS or conduct its own monitoring and evaluation of the approved SDO plan. This shall be undertaken in collaboration with concerned agencies in the Provincial CARP Implementing Team (PCIT), it being the implementing arm of the PARCCOM.

   The PARCCOM, as may be requested by the PARO, can also tap the expertise available in the PCIT to provide technical assistance to the DARPO-TFS in the evaluation of reports submitted by the corporation particularly in regard to its financial reports.
2. **DAR Regional Office-Task Force on SDO** shall:
   - a. Review the findings and recommendation of the PARO on whether or not to revoke the approved SDO plan and submit its recommendation to the RD for his/her disposition;
   - b. Review the petitions/protests filed by the concerned party on the results of the selection of the potential beneficiaries who may qualify as substitute to the beneficiaries and submit its recommendation to the RD for the resolution of said petitions/protests;
   - c. Address other issues affecting the implementation of approved SDO plans which may be raised by the PARO and other concerned parties; and
   - d. Perform other related functions as may be assigned by the higher authorities of DAR.
3. **DLR Central Office-Task Force on SDO** shall:
   - a. Review the findings and recommendations of the Regional Director on whether or not to revoke the SDO plan of the corporation and submit its recommendation to the Secretary for the latter's endorsement to and deliberation by the PARC Executive Committee;
   - b. Address other protests/issues raised by concerned parties/groups which were brought to its attention;
   - c. Conduct ocular inspection, when necessary, to validate and gather additional information on certain issues which may need its intervention, and
   - d. Perform related functions as may be assigned by the Secretary.

B. Foci of Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation shall be focused on the outcome of implementation of the SDO plans such as the overall viability of the corporation's agricultural operations, improvement in the income level of the beneficiaries, if any, as well as the level of acceptance of SDO implementation by the beneficiaries, among others. The conduct of said activities shall be based on, but not limited to, the following documents: 1) approved SDO plan and MOA signed between the corporation and the beneficiaries; 2) annual audited financial statements submitted by the corporation; and 3) updated list of beneficiaries submitted by the corporation.

The review and evaluation of the aforementioned documents shall be aided by the conduct of field inspection, to be undertaken by the DARPO-TFS, DARRO-TFS or DARCO-TFS, to validate information at the field level. The information to be gathered from these documents are described and/or specified in details in the reports enumerated below.

C. Submission of Reports

The corporation shall submit to the DARPO–TFS the following reports:

1. Semi-Annual Reports
   - a. Employment and Other Benefits Received by the Beneficiaries

     These reports shall include data on employment of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries such as the rate or salaries/wages they received for a particular period, and other benefits granted to the beneficiaries by the corporation like medical/dental assistance, education, utilities, etc. (SDO Form Nos. 1, 1-A, 1-B, and 1-C)). These reports should be submitted one month after the end of the previous semester.
   - b. Updated Masterlist of Beneficiaries

     The corporation shall submit an updated Masterlist of Beneficiaries (SDO Form No. 2) which shall be the subject of validation by the DARMO on a semi-annual basis. This report shall be submitted one month after the end of the previous semester.
2. Annual Reports
   - a. Distribution of Dividends, Production and Profit Shares and Homelots

     The corporation shall submit its annual reports on the distribution of dividends on the shares of stocks, including production/profits shares (if any), and homelots to the beneficiaries, using the attached format (SDO Form Nos. 3 and 3-A). Form 3-A (Distribution of Annual Dividends, Production and Profit Shares and Homelots) must be submitted under oath by the Secretary of the BOD of the corporation.
   - b. Audited Financial Statement

     The corporation shall also submit its annual audited financial statement which should be stamped and received by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).
   - c. General Information Sheet

     In addition, the corporation shall submit its General Information Sheet (GIS) which will provide information on the names, nationality, addresses, and Tax Identification Number (TIN) of the Officers and Directors of the corporation, list of stockholders, among others (SDO Form Nos. 4, 4-A and 4-B). The GIS should be certified correct by the Secretary of the BOD of the corporation.

   The abovementioned annual reports shall be submitted not later than four (4) months after the end of the previous year.

D. Evaluation of Monitoring Reports

The DARPO-TFS shall evaluate the semi-annual and annual reports to determine the degree and overall compliance of the corporation with the terms and conditions specified under the approved SDO plan and the MOA. The results or outputs of said evaluation shall be disseminated by the PARO to the concerned beneficiaries and corporation for whatever appropriate follow-up action which they may initiate.

These monitoring reports shall also be forwarded to the DARCO-TFS, through the DAR RD, as part of the DAR's overall sectoral monitoring reports. The DARCO-TFS shall be responsible for farming out said reports to the DAR Planning Service and to the PARC Secretariat.

E. Review of Financial Statements

In addition to the evaluation of semi-annual and annual reports, the financial records of the corporation shall be reviewed based on its audited financial statements for the last three (3) years. The review will help determine whether or not the corporation's financial viability can be sustained in the long term and, consequently, its ability to provide benefits to the beneficiaries as mandated under the approved SDO plan/MOA. This shall be undertaken by the DARPO-TFS, at least every three (3) years or as the need arises, using different analytical tools such as Income Statement Analysis, Financial Ratios, among others. The DARPO-TFS, through the PARO, may seek the assistance of PARCCOM in tapping the technical expertise available in the PCIT to provide the necessary support in the said financial review.

F. Impact Evaluation of Approved SDO Plans

The DAR, through the PSRS, shall conduct or commission an impact evaluation of the approved SDO plans to determine the overall impact of these plans to the socio-economic welfare of the beneficiaries. The conduct of said activity shall be funded from the budget of the DAR-Policy, Planning and Legal Affairs Office (PPLAO). The results of said impact evaluation can be used as inputs in policy formulation with regard to the future of SDO implementation.

VI. DISPOSITION OF PROTESTS/COMPLAINTS ON THE REPORT OF VIOLATIONS IN THE SDO PLAN AND MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

The complex nature of SDO arrangement necessitates that agency jurisdiction should be delineated as regards the disposition of protests or complaints arising from its implementation. Under the SDO, the beneficiaries are considered as stockholders and the law recognizes their rights for representation in the BOD while at the same time they serve as workers/ employees of the corporation. There may also be a situation in which possible internal conflicts may arise between and among the labor unions or cooperatives of the beneficiaries. Thus, conflicts and/or protests on the report of violations in the implementation of the SDO plan/MOA may be brought to any of the following agencies/forums, for resolution, depending on the principal cause of action:

A. Agency Jurisdiction

1. **Department of Labor and Employment and its Attached Agencies** [e.g., the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) and Bureau of Labor Relations (BLR)] if there are violations in the appropriate provisions of the Labor Code;
2. **Regional Trial Court (RTC)** if the disputes are intra-corporate in nature;
3. **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** if the issues involved are corporate in nature consistent with the provisions of the Corporation Code of the Philippines and the Securities Regulation Code;
4. **Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)** if the issues involved are intra-cooperative dispute; or
5. **Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC)** if the issues call for the revocation/cancellation of the approved SDO plan/MOA.

On the basis of the aforementioned delineation of agency jurisdiction, the affected party should directly lodge its protests or complaints to the appropriate agency.

B. Alternative Dispute Resolution

Before resorting to the aforementioned forums, however, the concerned parties must exhaust voluntary methods, such as arbitration and mediation, in resolving their disputes in accordance with the provisions of RA No. 9285 ("An Act to Institutionalize the Use of an Alternative Dispute Resolution System in the Philippines and to Establish the Office for Alternative Dispute Resolution, and for Other Purposes").

C. Revocation of the Approved SDO Plan and MOA

In case of protests/complaints for the possible cancellation of the corporation's approved SDO plan/MOA, the investigation and disposition of such protests shall be governed by the following:

1. Grounds for the Cancellation of Approved SDO Plan/MOA

   The grounds for the cancellation/revocation of the approved SDO plan/MOA shall be as follows:
   - a. When the corporation fails to implement the approved SDO plan/MOA within two (2) years after its approval;
   - b. When the corporation fails to provide the beneficiaries with guaranteed and continuous employment in the agricultural land by deliberately curtailing or shortening farm operations and work schedules thereby resulting to decreased or low farm income by the beneficiaries;
   - c. When the corporation fails to provide benefits to the beneficiaries, as may be stipulated in the approved SDO plan/MOA, such as dividends, production and profit shares accruing to the shares of stock without justifiable reasons. For this purpose, situations which are beyond the control of the corporation such as *force majeure* can be considered as a justifiable reason.
   - d. When the agricultural operations are no longer financially and economically viable; or
   - e. When a portion of the agricultural land was converted into non-agricultural use without the prior written consent by the majority of the beneficiaries under the SDO plan.
2. Operating Procedures (Flow Chart in Annex B)

   For petition/protest which calls for the revocation of the SDO plan/MOA, it shall be filed, under oath, before the PARO by the majority members of the Board of Directors of the cooperative or officers of the association. The petition shall be accompanied by Resolution, signed by the majority of the beneficiaries, which authorizes the BOD of the cooperative or officers of the association to file such petition/protest. For subsequent pleadings, these will also be signed by the majority of the aforementioned officers.
   - a. Preliminary Investigation by the PARO

     On the basis of the sworn complaint filed by the majority of the officers of the cooperative or association of the beneficiaries, the PARO, through the DARPO-TFS, shall initiate the conduct of preliminary investigation on the report of alleged violations in the implementation of the approved SDO plan/MOA committed by the concerned corporation and submit his/her recommendation to the RD on whether or not to cancel the same.
   - b. Investigation by the Regional Director

     The findings and recommendations of the PARO shall be endorsed to the Regional Director for the latter's evaluation and investigation, through the DARRO-TFS, which will be guided by the following:
     - b.1 Service of Notice of Investigation

       The Notice of Investigation, including the sworn complaint, shall be served to the corporate landowner by the Regional Director either through personal delivery or by registered mail.
     - b.2 Filing of Answers

       Upon receipt of the Notice of Investigation, the corporate landowner shall have a 15-day period within which to reply to the allegations in the petition, or by averring affirmative defense, counterclaims or cross claims. The filing of any motion (e.g., motion for extension of time to file an answer, bill of particulars, etc.) may be entertained provided it will not go beyond another 15-day period to answer. There shall be no declaration of default.
     - b.3 Nature of the Investigation

       The conduct of investigation shall be administrative and non-litigious in nature. Subject to the requirements of due process, the technicalities of law and procedure, and the rules governing the admissibility and sufficiency of evidence required under the Rules of Court shall not strictly apply.

       During the investigation proper, or immediately thereafter, the parties shall be required by the Regional Director to simultaneously submit their respective position papers, sworn statements or affidavits (in addition to the petition/complaints and to counter or cross claims), and the supporting documentary evidence, if any, within a 15-day period from receipt of the Order.
     - b.4 Submission of Recommendation by the Regional Director to the DARCO-TFS

       The DARRO-TFS shall finish the investigation within 30 days from submission of the parties' respective Position Papers or from the expiration of the period to submit thereof, in case of a review initiated *motu proprio*. The Regional Director shall forward his/her recommendations to the DARCO-TFS within that 30-day period on whether or not to cancel the SDO plan.
   - c. Review by the DARCO-TFS

     The DARCO-TFS shall finish its review of the report of the Regional Director within the 30-day period upon receipt thereof. The DAR Secretary shall have 15 days to review the findings and recommendations of the DARCO-TFS and endorse same to the PARC Executive Committee, through the PARC Secretariat, for the latter's deliberation.
   - d. Review by the PARC Executive Committee

     The PARC Executive Committee, in turn, shall deliberate said investigation report and endorse its recommendation to the PARC, through a Resolution, on whether or not to revoke the approved SDO plan of the concerned corporation.
   - e. Decision of the PARC

     The decision of the PARC, whether approving or denying the revocation of the SDO plan, shall become final and executory if no appeal is received within a 15-day period upon receipt thereof by the concerned parties

D. Investigation by the DOLE (e.g., NLRC and BLR), SEC, CDA, or the Regular Court

The investigation being undertaken by the DOLE (e.g., NLRC and BLR), SEC, CDA, or by the regular court will not, in any way, hamper the proceedings of investigation being undertaken by the DAR. Appeals on Orders/Decisions issued by these agencies shall be governed by their respective Rules of Procedures or, as appropriate, the Rules of Court

E. Effects of the Revocation of Approved SDO Plan/MOA

1. Once the decision by the PARC or by other appropriate forum canceling the approved SDO plan/MOA became final and executory and upon receipt of such decision by DAR, the latter shall proceed with the immediate coverage of the corporation's landholding under CARP.
2. After the subject landholding has been placed under compulsory acquisition, the concerned field offices of DAR shall proceed with the documentation of said landholding in accordance with the existing policies and guidelines on the matter.

   The beneficiaries under the SDO plan shall undergo the process of identification, screening and selection as set forth under DAR AO No. 7, Series of 2003 ["CY 2003 Guidelines on the Identification, Screening and Selection of, and Distribution to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs) of Private Agricultural Lands Under RA 6657"] as well as based on other existing or future Guidelines which may be issued on the matter.
3. Upon cancellation of the approved SDO plan/MOA, the beneficiaries shall be compensated by the corporation of the following:
   - a. Shares of stocks acquired or purchased by the beneficiaries in accordance with the pertinent provisions of the Securities Regulation Code and Corporation Code; and
   - b. Retirement benefits and other privileges as workers of the corporation in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Labor Code
4. The ownership of homelots, including the improvements made thereon, if any, shall be governed by the MOA or by any documents which conveyed the same to the beneficiaries.
5. As may be warranted, the DARPO, in coordination with concerned agencies, may provide assistance to the beneficiaries to collect their payments on the shares of stock, as may be appropriate, and benefits as workers of the corporation from the proceeds of landowners' compensation

VII. TRANSFER OF SHARES OF STOCK

A. Transfer of Shares of Stock

Transfer of shares of stock can take place in any of the following situations: a) when the beneficiary opts to sell or dispose the same; b) when the beneficiary dies and the legal heir/s opts to sell his/her shares of stocks or opts to assume the obligations as a stockholder in the corporation; or c) when the corporation files a petition for the substitution of the beneficiaries whose whereabouts can no longer be traced in his/her last known postal address or permanent residence. Except when the legal heir opts to assume the responsibility of a stockholder, the potential beneficiary shall first undergo the screening and selection processes by the DARPO-TFS in accordance with the procedures set forth in this AO

1. When the Beneficiary Opts to Sell His/Her Shares of Stocks

   The beneficiary (or the offeror) may opt to sell his/her shares of stock by transmitting to the Secretary of the BOD of the corporation, by personal delivery, a written offer to transfer or sell said stock, specifying therein the number of shares to be sold and price per share.

   Upon receipt of the written offer, the Secretary shall then submit to the PARO the list of potential beneficiaries who may be qualified to buy those shares of stock. Only after the said potential beneficiaries had been selected, in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in this AO, that they will be allowed to buy the shares of stock.

   Any offered stock not purchased by the potential beneficiaries within the 60-day period or within a period as may be agreed upon by the concerned parties may thereafter be sold or disposed of by the offeror to other beneficiaries who are stockholders of record.

   Only upon full payment by the new beneficiary of the stock offered and registration of the same that the corporation can include his/her name in the Masterlist of Beneficiaries.
2. When the Beneficiary Dies

   In case of death of the beneficiary, the legal heir/s may either opt to sell the shares of stock in accordance with the procedures outlined above (Item VII, A-1) or assume the responsibility and obligation of a stockholder of the corporation. Should the legal heir/s decides to assume that responsibility, he/she shall submit proof/s to the Secretary of the BOD that he/she is the successor-in-interest of the beneficiary or that he/she is the authorized representative of the legal heirs. The corporation, in turn, will validate the identity of the successor or representative and only upon positive validation of his/her identity and registration of the same that he/she can be included in the Masterlist of Beneficiaries.
3. When the Whereabouts of the Beneficiary Can No Longer Be Traced

   The corporation may also file a petition before the PARO for the substitution of a beneficiary whose whereabouts can no longer be traced in his/her last known postal address or permanent residence. The corporation, however, must have shown that it has exerted diligent efforts to reach out with the beneficiary. Thus, the petition shall be accompanied by a return card or a certification from a newspaper of general circulation that the name of said beneficiary has been published by the corporation.

   The petition shall also contain the name/s of the potential beneficiary/ies who may be qualified as substitute to the beneficiary/ies in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in this AO. Those who can be qualified as such shall also be given 60 days to purchase the shares of stock.

   Only upon qualification and full payment of the shares of stock that the new beneficiary can be included in the Masterlist of Beneficiaries.

B. Qualifications of the Potential Beneficiary

1. Legal heir of the beneficiary;
2. Regular farmworker presently employed by the corporation;
3. Seasonal farmworker presently employed by the corporation; and
4. Permanent resident of the barangay and/or the municipality, if applicable.

C. Submission of Documents

1. In case the petitioner is the corporation, it shall submit the following documents:
    - a. Certified list of potential beneficiary/ies indicating their address, civil status, age, and period of employment in the corporation who may be qualified as substitute to the beneficiary/ies; and
    - b. Latest pay slips or payroll of the potential beneficiary/ies.
2. In case of death of the beneficiary and the legal heir/s decides to assume the responsibility of a stockholder, the successor shall submit proof/s to the Secretary of the BOD that he/she is the successor-in-interest of the beneficiary or he/she is the authorized representative of the legal heirs

D. Procedures in the Selection of Potential Beneficiaries

1. Identification, Screening and Selection of the Potential Beneficiaries
   The process of identification, screening and selection of the potential beneficiaries shall be as follows:
    - a. Within five (5) days, the DARPO-TFS shall conduct initial review of the preliminary list of potential beneficiaries submitted by the concerned party through cross-checking from the list regularly submitted by the corporation. It shall also check the completeness of the documents submitted by the concerned party and notify the same if there are any lacking documents which need to be submitted;
    - b. After the initial review, the DARPO-TFS shall notify the potential beneficiaries (SDO Form No. 5), through registered mail or personal service, to attend public hearings for purposes of information dissemination on the rights and obligations of being a beneficiary under the SDO and for conducting individual interviews of the potential beneficiaries, whenever practicable, to further validate their qualifications and to gather additional information which would be relevant in establishing their qualifications.
      The hearing shall also serve as the venue for clarifying issues which may be raised on the qualifications or disqualifications of certain potential beneficiaries.
    - c. After 10 days of the hearing and interview, the PARO shall, then, transmit the preliminary list of potential beneficiaries, submitted by the concerned party, to the MARO for a 15-day posting period in the barangay or in other conspicuous places where the landholding is located.
    - d. After the 15-day posting period, the MARO shall secure Certificate of Posting (SDO Form No. 6) from the BARC Chairman or Barangay Chairman;
    - e. In case no protest is filed within the 15-day posting period, the DARPO-TFS shall finalize the list of qualified beneficiaries for approval by the PARO and subsequent endorsement to the corporation, copy furnished the DARRO-TFS and the DARCO-TFS. Only the names included in the said list shall be qualified to buy the shares of stock or be the successor of the beneficiary.
2. Resolution of Protests in the Selection of Beneficiaries
    - a. Any person or interested party may file a written protest for the inclusion or exclusion of certain potential beneficiaries from the preliminary list of beneficiaries with the Regional Director not later than 15 days from the last day of posting;
    - b. Upon receipt of the protest, the Regional Director shall order the PARO to transmit all pertinent records/documents of the case and resolve the protest within 30 days from receipt of the records from the latter;
    - c. The Regional Director, through the DARRO-TFS, shall conduct an investigation on the protest/petition to determine the merits of the case through administrative summary proceedings;
    - d. The Regional Director shall furnish the PARO and all parties concerned of his/her decision on the protest;
    - e. Pursuant to the Regional Director's decision, the PARO, through the DARPO-TFS, shall include and/or exclude the names of potential beneficiaries from the list and notify the concerned parties, through registered mail or personal service, of said decision.
      The list becomes final and executory after the lapse of 15-day period from receipt of the Regional Director's decision on the protest.
    - f. In case of an appeal/motion for reconsideration is made on said decision/order by the Regional Director, the rules and procedures as provided for under DAR A.O. No. 3, Series of 2003, ("2003 Rules and Procedures for Agrarian Law Implementation Cases") shall be followed.

VIII. ELECTION OF THE BENEFICIARIES' REPRESENTATIVE/S TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION

The election of the beneficiaries' representative/s to the Board shall be held every year and will coincide one month before the expiry of the term of office of the incumbent representative/s to the BOD. It shall be administered by the cooperative or by the beneficiaries' association, through its Election Committee, with assistance from the DARPO-TFS as may be requested by said cooperative or association. Only the names included in the Masterlist of Beneficiaries shall be allowed to participate and vote in the election. No proxy voting shall be allowed.

The number of Board seats, which will be the subject of election, shall be based on the equity shares of the beneficiaries as contained in the approved SDO plan.

The expenses for the conduct of the election shall be borne by the cooperative or by the association. In the absence of the cooperative or association, the DARPO-TFS shall administer the election through secret balloting and the DARPO shall provide the supplies and materials for the conduct of such election. In either situation, the conduct of election shall be governed by the following rules and regulations:

A. Qualifications of the Candidate

1. Qualified beneficiary of the corporation who is included in the Masterlist of Beneficiaries under the SDO plan;
2. Must be a stockholder of record and must own at least one (1) share of the capital stock of the corporation;
3. Must not have been convicted by a final judgment of an offense punishable by imprisonment for a period exceeding six (6) years or a violation of the Corporation Code committed within five (5) years prior to the date of his/her election or appointment; and
4. Must be a member in good standing of his/her cooperative or association, if there is an existing one, as defined in its constitution and by-laws.

B. Filing of Certificate of Candidacy

The candidate shall file his/her certificate of candidacy on any day from the commencement of the election period but not later than the day before the beginning of the campaign period. It shall be filed to the cooperative's or the association's Election Committee or to the DARPO-TFS stating, among others, his/her eligibility to run for said office, his/her personal circumstances and his/her commitment to perform the duties and responsibilities attendant to the position.

C. Election and Campaign Periods

The election period shall commence 15 days before the day of the election while the campaign period shall commence five (5) days before the election day.

D. Polling Place, Official Ballots and Election Returns

The election shall be held in the corporation's premises in the presence of other stockholders. Election paraphernalia shall be prepared by the Election Committee or by the DARPO-TFS such as the voting booths, ballot boxes, tally board, and official ballots, the number or quantity of which shall depend on the number of the registered voters.

E. Casting and Counting of Votes

The casting of votes shall commence at 8:00 A.M. and shall end at 12:00 noon or earlier as soon as all the names included in the Masterlist of Beneficiaries have cast their votes and, thereafter, start the counting of votes. In the appreciation of the votes, the following rules shall be observed:

1. Where the first name or surname is only written, the vote for such candidate is valid if there is no other candidate with the same first name or surname.
2. Where only the first name of the candidate is written, which when read, has a sound similar to the surname of another candidate, the vote shall be counted in favor of the candidate with such surname. If there are two or more candidates with the same full name, first name or surname, and one of them is the incumbent, and on the ballot is written only such full name, first name or surname, the vote shall be counted in favor of the incumbent;
3. In case the candidate is a woman who uses her maiden or married surname or both and there is another candidate with the same surname, a ballot bearing only such surname shall be counted in favor of the candidate who is an incumbent.
4. When two or more words are written in the same line, all of which are the surname of two or more candidates, the same shall not be counted for any of them, unless one is the surname of the incumbent for whom the vote shall be counted;
5. A name or surname incorrectly written which, when read, has a sound similar to the name or surname of a candidate when correctly written shall be counted in his/her favor; and
6. When a name of a candidate appears not in the line provided in the ballot shall be counted in his/her favor.

The relevant provisions of the Omnibus Election Code, as amended, relative to the appreciation of votes shall apply in suppletory character.

F. Proclamation of the Election Results

After the completion of election returns, the Election Committee or the DARPO-TFS shall officially announce the total number of votes received by each candidate and those receiving the highest number of votes, which correspond to the number of vacant seats, shall be declared elected. The Election Committee or the DARPO-TFS shall post the results thereof bearing the signature of their officers.

In case of tie, the deadlock shall be resolved through the drawing of lots and the candidate favored by luck shall be proclaimed as the eventual winner. However, in case there are only two candidates who tied in the number of votes, they may opt to serve one-half term for each of them.

G. Pre-Proclamation Controversy

In case of controversies arising from the counting and appreciation of ballots and election returns, these shall be filed in writing by the concerned candidate before the Election Committee or the DARPO-TFS within 24 hours upon termination of the counting of votes. Said protest shall be decided with finality by the Election Committee or by the DARPO-TFS within three (3) days from receipt thereof.

In case of unresolved issues arising from the interpretation of the abovementioned procedures, appropriate provisions of the Securities Regulation Code and/or Corporation Code shall prevail.

IX. REPEALING CLAUSE

All Administrative Orders, Memorandum Circulars and related issuances inconsistent hereof are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly

X. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

If for any reason, any provision of this AO is challenged and held to be unconstitutional by a competent court, none of the other provisions thereof shall be affected and the same shall remain in full force and effect

XI. EFFECTIVITY

This Order shall take effect ten (10) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation

January 26, 2006, Diliman, Quezon City.

NASSER C. PANGANDAMAN
OIC-Secretary

(PDI - Jan 30, 2006)

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Hamas says it is ready to form Palestinian army

RAMALLAH, WEST BANK—THE LEADER OF HAMAS SUGGESTED that the Islamic group could create a Palestinian army that would include its militant wing—responsible for scores of deadly attacks on Israelis—in the aftermath of its crushing victory in parliamentary elections.

Israeli officials condemned the plan Saturday, demanding that Hamas renounce violence. Palestinian security officers, including loyalists from the defeated Fatah Party, said they would never submit to Hamas control.

"Hamas has no power to meddle with the security forces," said Jibril Rajoub, a Palestinian strongman.

The Hamas chief, Khaled Mashaal, reiterated that Hamas would not recognize Israel and indicated attacks on Israeli civilians would continue as long as Israel continued to target Palestinian civilians. "As long as we are under occupation then resistance is our right," he said.

Angry police stormed the parliament building in Gaza and armed militants marched into Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' compound in Ramallah to demonstrate their rejection of Hamas' authority. Their defiance raised fears of a spike in violence between Palestinian factions.

Clashes have already broken out between the two sides. Hamas gunmen wounded two policemen in Gaza early Saturday in what authorities said was a roadside ambush. The attack came hours after another firefight wounded a Hamas activist and two police officers, one of whom was in a coma Saturday.

Hamas won 74 out of 132 seats in parliamentary elections Wednesday to Fatah's 45. The militant group's victory threw the fate of international aid to the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority in doubt and darkened the chances for a peace deal with Israel.

Speaking from his base in Damascus, Syria, Mashaal insisted his group would not disarm and said Hamas' military wing, estimated at nearly 5,000 gunmen in Gaza alone, could be merged into a Palestinian army.

"We are ready to unify the weapons of Palestinian factions, with Palestinian consensus, and form an army like any independent state," he said.

Israeli officials demanded that Hamas look for peaceful solutions to the conflict.

"If Hamas wants to be considered a partner in peace, it's very clear what it has to do. It has to renounce terrorism, disarm, accept Israel's right to exist and support political solutions to issues rather than pursuing violent jihad," Israeli foreign ministry spokesperson Mark Regev said.

Mashaal also said Hamas would abide by existing agreements with the country "as long as it is in the interest of our people." *AP*

Tennessee driver IDs lure illegals in America

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE—Tennessee's driving certificate for illegal immigrants isn't supposed to be valid as a form of ID, but it's so popular that people are paying hundreds of dollars and traveling hundreds of miles to get one.

Tennessee has issued more than 51,000 certificates since 2004 when it became the first state in the nation to offer them—since joined by Utah. But not every certificate has gone to someone living in Tennessee.

Two major federal arrests in recent months exposed black-market shuttles carrying South and Central American immigrants south from New Jersey and north from Georgia to state licensing centers in Knoxville, where the immigrants got certificates using fake residency papers.

A third sweep near Nashville this week revealed a conspiracy in which prosecutors say state license examiners accepted bribes from a driving school to provide illegal immigrants with driver's licenses and certificates without testing.

This comes as Tennessee's certificate system is being studied as a possible model for handling "non-conforming drivers" under Congress' recently adopted Real ID program that will set a national standard for driver's licenses by 2008.

"We have seen individuals coming to Tennessee to take advantage of the driver's certificate program because they are easy to obtain," Acting US Attorney Russ Dedrick said.

Although "not valid for identification" appears in bold red letters on the face of the wallet-size certificates, Dedrick said banks accept them as legal ID and they "can easily be passed off for other types of identification documents."

Lawyer Mike Whalen, whose client Zeneida Concepcion Rivera faces up to four years in prison if convicted of bringing as many as 100 immigrants from New Jersey to Knoxville for certificates, said the government is making too much of the problem.

"Somebody went through the roof and said, 'Remember 9-11, every one had driver's licenses,'" he said. "Well, none of these Mexican immigrants are in flight school anywhere. There is a difference."

That argument carries little weight in law enforcement circles.

The certificate law "just kind of opened up a flood gate of everyone wanting to come here to get some sort of identification," said Knox County Sheriff Tim Hutchison, whose officers discovered 58 illegal immigrants used the same Knoxville address to get a certificate.

Applicants must provide two documents, such as utility bills or a lease, to show they live in Tennessee, and a Social Security number—or a sworn affidavit if there is none. They also must pass an eye exam, a driving rules test and a road test. *AP*

MEMBERS of a rescue team search for victims, early Jan. 29, in Katowice, Poland after the roof of an exhibition hall collapsed under heavy snow earlier in the evening during a pigeon-fanciers event. AFP

Roof collapses in Poland hall, kills 60; death toll seen rising

CHORZOW, POLAND—A ROOF collapsed at an exhibition hall in Poland packed with hundreds of people, killing at least 60, and officials said on Sunday they feared the death toll could rise.

As temperatures plunged to minus 15 Celsius overnight, rescuers using floodlights battled through snow and debris to try to find survivors from Saturday's disaster in the southern city of Chorzow.

About 140 people were also injured when the metal roof of the modern building, the size of a soccer field, collapsed during a gathering of pigeon enthusiasts from across Europe.

"I can confirm that 60 people have died and we are afraid that this might not be the final figure," fire brigade spokesperson Jaroslaw Wojtasik said.

Officials said the dead included foreigners and identified one as a Belgian. Hospitals said five Germans, a Czech and a Belgian were injured.

The fire brigade and police said the weight of snow on the roof caused the collapse, but the building's manager told Polish television that snow had been regularly cleared from the roof.

"We heard something snap like a match breaking and people started to panic right away, realizing what was happening," one unnamed witness told the TVN24 television station from hospital.

"I started to run and something fell on me, others trampled over me and I was able to crawl out on hands and knees."

Dog rescue team head Jan Woloszyn told TVN24 on Sunday:

"Trained dogs have found no trace of life under the rubble."

Another rescue official, Leszek Suski, told a news conference: "With such a low temperature the chances of finding someone alive are slim but we still have hope.

"We estimate that under the debris there still might be a dozen or even several dozens of people." *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Russia nabs 2 spies for UK

MOSCOW—Russian security services have arrested two spies working for British intelligence, the Interfax news agency said on Saturday, citing the former head of Russia's state security service. Russia accused Britain last Sunday of running a James Bond-style spying operation in Moscow using a receiver hidden in a fake rock to communicate secret information. It named four embassy workers as intelligence officers running Russian agents. Former FSB head Nikolai Kovalyov did not make clear whether the two people arrested were linked to the "fake rock" affair. It appeared likely, however, that they were Russians rather than British officials since diplomats have immunity from arrest. *Reuters*

Wanna buy Hitler paintings?

LONDON—Twenty-one watercolors and sketches by Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler are to be auctioned in Britain after 70 years in a suitcase in a Belgian attic, the Sunday Telegraph newspaper reported. The collection was apparently produced between 1916 and 1918 when the young Hitler was a corporal during the Great War. The works are to be auctioned at Jefferys in Lostwithiel, southwest England, and are expected to fetch up to 100,000 pounds (146,200 euros, $177,300), the British weekly reported. *AFP*

Video of Western hostages

DUBAI—The captors of four Western peace activists in Iraq said US-led forces had one last chance to free Iraqi prisoners or they would kill the hostages, Al Jazeera television said on Saturday. The Arabic channel aired a video from the Swords of Truth group, apparently showing the two Canadians, one Briton and one American standing against a wall. The grainy footage, shot in a dark room, was dated Jan. 21. The hostages appeared to be speaking to the camera but their voices could not be heard. Briton Norman Kember, American Tom Fox and Canadians James Loney and Harmeet Sooden were kidnapped on Nov. 26 in Baghdad, where they were working with a Christian peace organization, by the previously unknown Swords of Truth. *Reuters*

Elephant nations meet

KUALA LUMPUR—Thirteen Asian countries with wild elephants met as a group in Malaysia for the first time last week to discuss the survival of the species as expanding human populations encroach on its habitat. The aim of the meeting was to reach a consensus on effective ways to tackle the serious threats facing the continent's largest mammal. The gathering was facilitated by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) which warned that the situation facing the Asian elephant was critical. "Just over five percent of the original Asian elephant habitat remains today, and its population has declined over the past half century to an estimated 30,000-50,000 animals in the wild," it said in a statement. This is just 10 to 15 percent of the African elephant population. *AFP*

US mother kills 3 kids

DE QUEEN, Arkansas—Police found the bodies of three children lying side-by-side on a bed in their home after their mother said she smothered them, investigators said. Officers were sent Saturday to the southwestern Arkansas home after the father called authorities from New York saying his wife had confessed to the killings. Paula Eleazar Mendez, 43, collapsed when officers arrived and was taken to a hospital to be treated for ingesting a toxic substance, officials said. *AP*

London police 'faked evidence' on shot Brazilian, says report

LONDON—UNDERCOVER London police officers faked vital evidence to cover up their fatal role in the shooting of innocent Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes, mistaken for a suicide bomber, a newspaper alleged Sunday.

Special Branch officers from London's Metropolitan Police tried to change a surveillance log detailing the electrician's movements to hide the fact that they had wrongly identified him, the News of the World weekly claimed.

De Menezes, 27, was shot seven times in the head on a London Underground train at Stockwell station in south London.

He was killed on July 22 last year, the day after an alleged attempt to replicate the July 7 attacks by four suspected suicide bombers which killed 52 innocent Underground and bus commuters.

The alleged cover-up meant the blame for the tragedy would have been pinned on senior Met Police commanders or the armed police who fired the bullets—leaving them open to murder charges, the newspaper said.

The revelations are apparently contained in the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)'s report into the death, which was delivered to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) 10 days ago.

A Special Branch officer mistakenly reported that De Menezes was Hussein Osman, 27, who is facing charges of conspiracy to murder in connection with the July 21 incident.

However, once they realized their fatal error, the log was altered to read that no positive identification had been made.

A government department source told the tabloid: "It says the log was actually tampered with in a major way.

"In particular the words 'and' and 'not' were inserted about the Osman ID, so it read 'and it was not Osman' rather than 'it was Osman.'"

The log was allegedly changed at a debriefing meeting 10 hours after the Brazilian was gunned down.

It had been produced by colleagues of the officers listening to the team's radio messages. *AFP*

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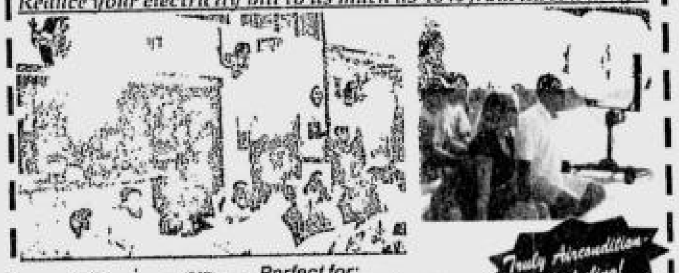

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Nasa top climate expert says W. House tried to silence him

WASHINGTON—NASA'S TOP CLIMATE SCIENTIST has accused the Bush administration of trying to stop him from speaking out after being called in a lecture for swift cuts in emissions of the greenhouse gases linked to global warming, The New York Times reported Sunday.

James Hansen, director of the US space agency's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, said that officials at Nasa headquarters had ordered the public affairs staff to review his forthcoming lectures, papers, postings on the Goddard website and requests for media interviews, the Times reported.

"They feel their job is to be this censor of information going out to the public," said Hansen, who told the paper he would ignore the restrictions.

The report quoted Dean Acosta, deputy assistant administrator for public affairs at Nasa, as denying there was any effort to silence Hansen.

"That's not the way we operate here at Nasa," Acosta told the Times. "We promote openness and we speak with the facts." Acosta said that government scientists were free to discuss scientific findings but that policy statements should be left to policy makers and appointed spokespersons.

"This is not about any individual or any issue like global warming," he told the Times. "It's about coordination."

"Since 1988, (Hansen) has been issuing public warnings about the long-term threat from heat-trapping emissions, dominated by carbon dioxide, that are an unavoidable byproduct of burning coal, oil and other fossil fuels. He has had run-ins with politicians or their appointees in various administrations, including budget watchers in the first Bush administration and Vice President Al Gore," the Times reported.

Hansen told the Times that "efforts to quiet him" had begun in a series of calls after a lecture he gave on Dec. 6, 2005, at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco.

"In the talk, he said that significant emission cuts could be achieved with existing technologies, particularly in the case of motor vehicles, and that without leadership by the United States, climate change would eventually leave the earth 'a different planet'," the Times said.

US administration policy is to use voluntary measures to slow, but not reverse, the growth of emissions.

"After that speech and the release of data by Dr. Hansen on Dec. 15 showing that 2005 was probably the warmest year in at least a century, officials at the headquarters of the space agency repeatedly phoned public affairs officers, who relayed the warning to Dr. Hansen that there would be 'dire consequences' if such statements continued, those officers and Dr. Hansen said in interviews," the Times said.

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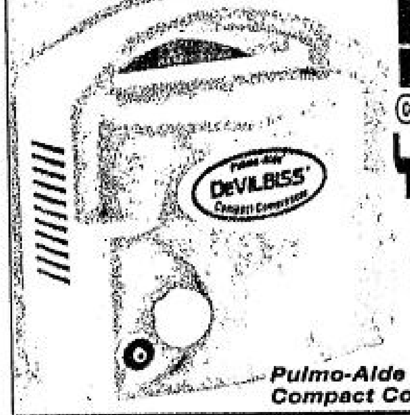

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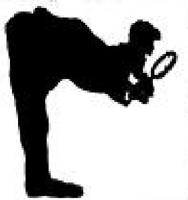

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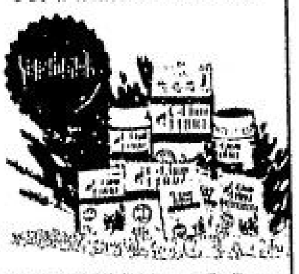

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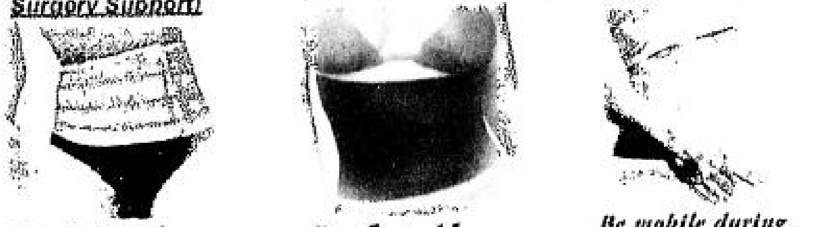

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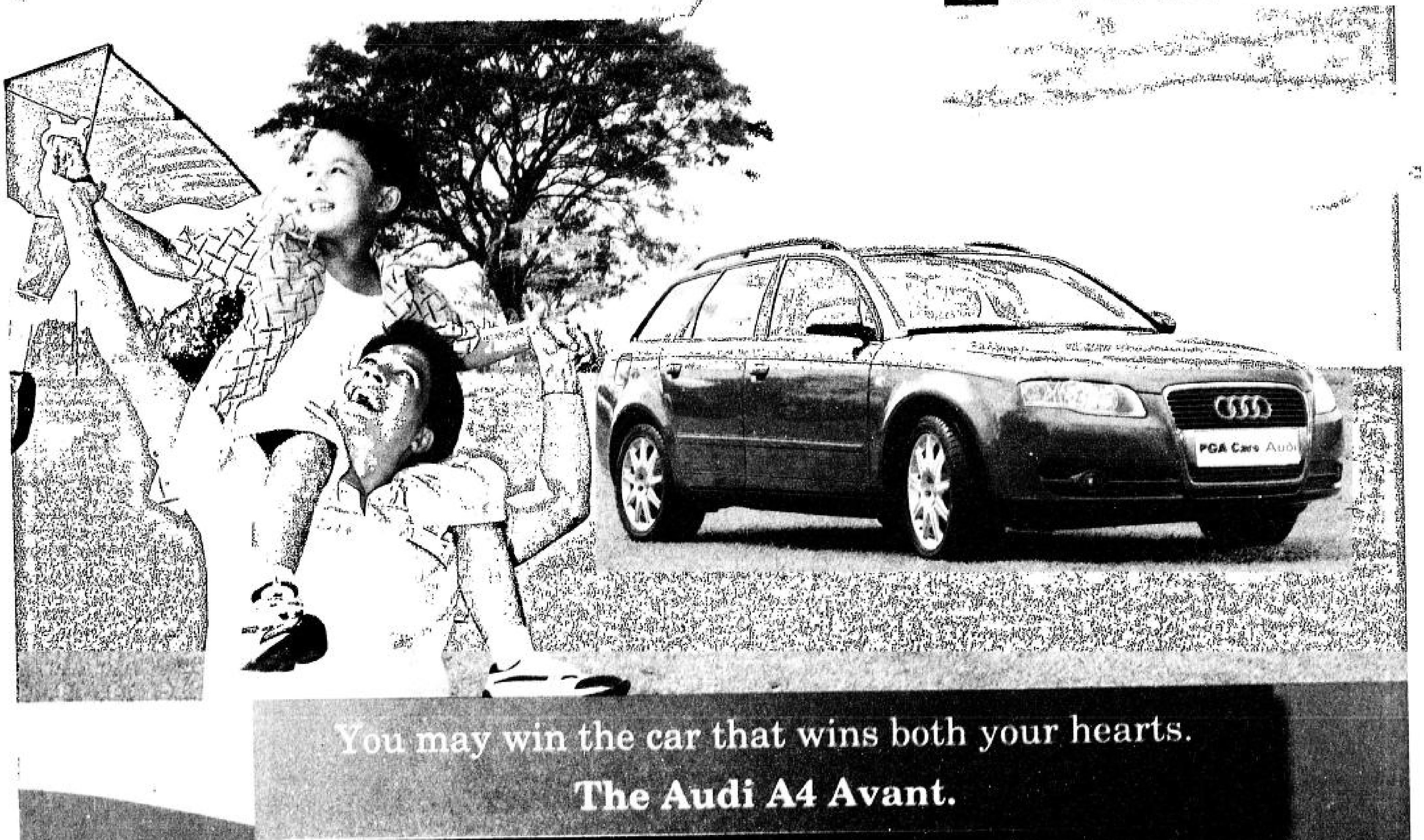

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Why Davide?

Editorials

IF THE PRESIDENT REALLY WANTED TO REFORM election practice in the Philippines, she could have done better than to appoint the recently retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as presidential adviser for election reform. She could have appointed the redoubtable Virgilio Garcillano.

Who better to fix a leak, after all, than a plumber? Davide is only a statesman. Garcillano is acknowledged by many (including tacitly by the President herself, who named him election commissioner before she ran for the presidency) as a master plumber, someone who not only can plug a hole or spring a leak, but even knows where the pipes are buried.

Of course, Garcillano has gone on record (through his testimony before Congress) as saying that the country's election system is in fact leak-proof. He has insisted that the election fraud President Macapagal-Arroyo is accused of committing or commissioning is almost impossible to do, much less pull off.

But we think that Garcillano protests too much; his own reputation in the election business (for that is apparently what it really is) is that of a smooth operator, someone who can—simply by receiving anxious phone calls from certain candidates—give them peace of mind. Besides, the *dagdag-bawas* cases are only a decade old; surely we haven't forgotten all of that?

So our modest suggestion: Garcillano, instead of Davide. To be sure, Davide was also an election commissioner once, during the heady, we-have-a-chance-to-set-things-right post-Marcos days. But he is too much the straight arrow; we cannot imagine him emerging from hiding, surrounded by masked, AK-47-toting bodyguards. In fact, we cannot imagine him going into hiding in the first place. Now, surely, that is a disqualifying trait.

We need someone with a pachydermatous quality, who can take Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos' appeals to pity (in response to withering and well-founded criticism from the Supreme Court and the Senate) without flinching (or laughing). We need someone with the equanimity of a philosopher, who can accept the hypocrisies of advantage-hungry politicians from both sides without passing judgment. (That can definitely be off-putting.) Not least, we need someone with an actor's aplomb, who can tell everyone with a straight face that the most contentious election since 1969 is in fact uncontroversial and clean.

That sounds like Garci, doesn't it?

Why, Davide?

WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW FORMER Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. reached his decision to accept the appointment as an adviser on election reform to this President. The objective of election reform is paramount; when President Macapagal-Arroyo announced on Rizal Day in 2002 that she would not run in the 2004 election, election reform was already one of the three overarching goals she had set for herself in the remaining months of her term. Now, with her 2004 election victory in serious doubt, election reform has only become more critical.

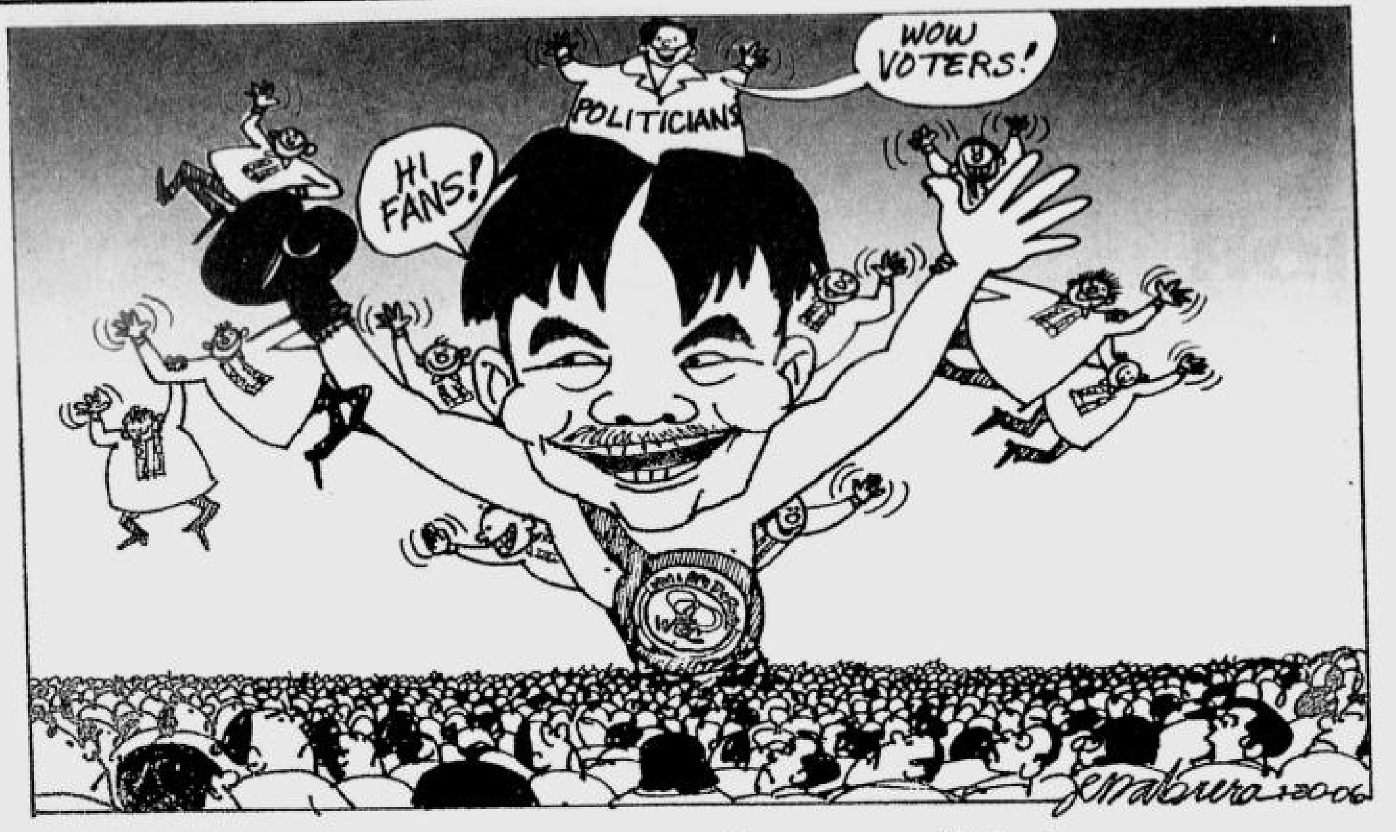
But we question whether this administration has in fact the strategic intent and the political will to reform the election system.

In the first place, does the executive have the moral capacity to persuade the remaining election commissioners to resign? The Supreme Court decision on the automated election case and the Senate committee report on the same matter allow us to argue in the strongest possible terms: If Benjamin Abalos and the other commissioners remain on board, no real reform will take place.

In other words, any advice Davide may offer will depend on a clean slate at the Commission on Elections. But given the controversy over the 2004 election, does anyone seriously think that President Arroyo has a moral ascendancy over the Comelec executives, which will allow her to force them from office? If anything, it is she who cannot afford to antagonize them.

For the record, we have no doubt that Davide, once the INQUIRER's Filipino of the Year, has the moral stature, the legal acumen and the executive experience the reform initiative needs. But above all else, election reform requires political will. As a mere presidential adviser, Davide can exercise none.

That makes him mere political window dressing.


HI FANS!
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Protect Pacquiao from politicians

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

MANNY PACQUIAO NEEDS PROTECTION. not from other boxers or from shady boxing promoters and managers. Not even from kidnappers who might want to dip into his million-dollar purse. No, he needs protection from the hordes of Filipino politicians who are already using him and will continue to use him for their own benefit. Now the surest way to get publicity is to stick close to Pacquiao. With so many cameras clicking and grinding in front of him, it is inevitable for anybody close to him to land in the newspapers or appear on TV. Sharing the stage with him is even better. One notorious politician even sang duets with him on the Plaza Miranda stage.

Manny is obviously flattered by all the attention and hoopla. That is something relatively new to this once poor boy from "GenSan," Cotabato. And that has been the downfall of many champions. A boxer has a shelf life of, at most, 10 years. After that, it is all downhill. At age 35, a boxer is old, unlike basketball players who can still play competitive basketball up to age 50 if he is really good—as in the case of Robert Jaworski, who would probably be still playing now had he not been elected senator.

We have had many international champions. (Pacquiao is not even an international champion yet. He did not win any championship in the bout against Erik Morales. What he got is the *consuelo de bobo* for boxers who do not make the top 10 contenders of the different weight divisions.) But except for one—Flash Elorde—they all faded away, poor and forgotten, the millions of pesos they won during their prime, gone. Many of them now live like paupers, objects of pity, not getting enough help from the government that pampered them while they were still up there.

That is what I'm afraid could happen to Manny Pacquiao. He's on top of the world now, a national hero, a multimillionaire, courted and flattered by politicians. They will use him and exploit him while he is still popular. They will surely use him to campaign for and endorse them. They may even use him to campaign for the ratification of a new constitution. And Manny may be seduced by all the flattery.

But wait until he starts losing fights. Watch the politicians and people turn away from him. This is what Pacquiao should watch out against. He should watch out for himself.

But alas, Pacquiao is already showing signs that he may follow in the footsteps of all the unfortunate ex-champions who have gone before him. One sign is conspicuous consumption. One of the things he's done was buy himself a Porsche sports car, one of the most expensive cars in the world. He is building homes and shopping malls in GenSan—the latter probably a good investment if he or his family has a knack for business. There are reports that he already has learned how to gamble. When he gets back to GenSan, it would probably be one party and drinking spree after another for him. His celebrity status has made him want to go into show business. He has already made a recording; he is entertaining notions of being a movie actor. And, horrors, he is being egged to go into politics. One day, he will suddenly discover that all his money and his friends are gone.

Of course, we are a free country. Anybody who wants to make a fool of himself is free to do so. But it is the duty of sports associations to take care of their athletes, to prevent them from sinking into the pitiful state that so many other athletes before them have sunk into. Sometimes, they have to be protected from their managers and "advisers," from their "friends," and, at times, even from their relatives.

And especially from politicians.

* * *

This year is the Year of the Fire Dog in the Chinese calendar. The fire dog means a red dog, probably, like the Australian dingo and the American coyote, which is not really red but brown; and are, technically, not dogs although they belong to the dog family.

In the Philippines, "red dogs" are plentiful. They can be found in the streets, thin and scraggly-looking, the so-called "*askals*" (for "*asong kalye*"). They are not the handsome, imported purebreeds that their owners like to strut around. No, they are the native Filipino dogs that Filipinos take home as cute and lovable puppies, but once they grow up into unhandsome adults, they are turned out by their owners into the streets to run around with other dogs and scrounge for food in the garbage cans where they pick up disease and parasites. They live a pitiful existence until disease or a passing vehicle mercifully ends it.

May the Year of the Fire Dog focus the attention of people, and of the national and local governments, to the plight of the poor *askal*. Even animal welfare societies have the colonial mentality of favoring dogs with pedigrees. Cara Philippines is the lone society I know that focuses on Filipino dogs. Its slogan is "Proudly Pinoy," and its pet shows emphasize native dogs and cats.

Most local government units have no humane program for the *askals*. The existing programs of some cities and municipalities are to shoot down strays, or to catch them and then confine them in cramped cages until they are gassed to death. Even the richest cities have no dog pounds or animal shelters: Quezon City, Makati and Manila, the three richest cities in Metro Manila that can afford to have them, strangely, have none.

We have a law against cruelty to animals (the Animal Welfare Act, or AWA) but it is not being implemented. On the contrary, dog-eating is a popular vice in a supposedly civilized city like Baguio and surrounding areas. Many *askals*, alas, end up on the dining tables of dog-eaters.

May the Year of the Fire Dog end this barbaric practice.

'Dangal'

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I LIKE THIS GROUP KARANGALAN. ITS MEMbers had another successful gathering at the Cultural Center of the Philippines last Friday and Saturday, and I couldn't be happier for them. I like them for a couple of reasons.

The first is that they are a group that highlights what is normally deemed "positive" in our lives. As Nicky Perlas, Panjee Lopez and several others explained on TV late last week, Karangalan wants to dispel the culture of defeatism and cynicism by showing the depth of talent and accomplishment that roisters in these parts, if only we would have the eyes to see them. It is not PR, it is truth. There is reason to hope, not by recourse to self-hypnotism but by feeling the vibrancy that beats at the heart of this country.

Nicky himself explains this best in his invitation to Karangalan: "Recall the recent example of a 12-year-old student who returned P300,000. How is it that Cristina Bugayong escaped the deadly influence of a culture perceived to be suffering from an epidemic of greed and corruption? Only a journey to the 'Other Philippines' will reveal to you the answer. Cristina is a citizen of the 'Other Philippines,' visible only to eyes that can see subtle connections and hidden patterns. This is the Philippines of vision, moral courage, compassion, competence, and achievement. And she is not alone. Dozens of artists, entrepreneurs, journalists, executives, athletes and other Filipinos have gotten global awards for their achievements. And, unknown to most, thousands more exemplify lives of moral courage and practical achievements. *May dangal ang Pinoy*!"

The second, and probably more important, reason I like them is that the prime movers of Karangalan are also members of Pagasa who are opposed to the existence of an illegitimate president. Their position, in fact, is to hold elections as soon as possible sans Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which presumes removing her first, though—if I know Nicky et al. completely—constitutionally. Clearly, the concept of creating a moral universe, or bringing to the fore what is good and decent in the current one, is not opposed to the concept of defeating an immoral one, or fighting what is rotten and indecent in the world we find ourselves in. They go hand-in-hand.

It's a good reminder to those who keep asking us to forget that we have a President who called up Garci with the express purpose of manipulating the results, and to move on from there. It is a timely reminder to those who keep saying they are fed up with politics, let's concentrate on the "positive" aspects of our lives and ignore everything else. It's a powerful reminder to those who talk of the "other Philippines" as though it exists apart from the one we immediately apprehend, the one that has GMA and the Lakas *trapos* dominating it.

I've read too many letters to the editor and articles that say a lot of good things are happening in this country, it's time we dwelled on them and not on the political static that is derailing us from progress. It's a wrongheaded idea based on the wrongheaded perception of what is "positive" and "negative." It presupposes that every criticism, every contradiction, every negation is negative, and every praise, every acquiescence, every affirmation is "positive." Nothing can be farther from the truth. Praising, embracing and affirming the dictatorial rule of Marcos is not positive, it is negative in the extreme. Praising, embracing and affirming the illegitimate rule of GMA is not positive, it is negative in the extreme. Ignoring tyranny and injustice altogether and dwelling instead on the "success stories" is not positive, it is negative in the extreme. It does not push progress along, it derails it.

I'm all for dwelling on the positive aspect of life in this country. I'm all for pushing for the "Other Philippines." But like Karangalan, I'm all for including among the positive aspects of life in this country, among the things that make up the "Other Philippines," the men and women who are loudly or silently fighting to remedy injustice and remove tyranny from this country, the men and women who are resolutely politically and righteously angrily struggling to rid this land of its scourge. They are part of what is positive. They show that this country has not become so cynical it has stopped believing in goodness and decency, in justice and rightness, it now believes only in turning a blind eye to their obliteration. Fighting evil is not negative, it is positive in the extreme.

True, not all of those fighting GMA are honorable or *marangal*. Some are opportunists, some are absolute blackguards. None of that detracts from the imperative to end an illegitimate rule. None of that sullies the nobility of standing up against it. All it does is compel us to be a little more discriminate and pick out the good eggs from the bad, the *marangal* from the *tuso*, the positive from the negative.

What a felicitous word "*karangalan*." The group couldn't have found a better name. "*Dangal*" is not so easy to translate into English. It doesn't just mean honor, it also means pride, purity of heart, nobility. It is the perfect word for a perfect cause. It is a cause that calls on us to change ourselves as much as the world around us. It is a cause that calls on us to build a just and moral world as much as a rich and prosperous one. It is a cause that calls on us to buckle down to the tasks of the present even as we dream of a better future. The internal and the external, the political and the moral, the struggle to rid and the struggle to build: They are not two separate worlds, they are the two sides of a coin.

Pride and honor and nobility have never been inimical to progress. They are the foundations of it.

The proposed new Charter

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

A LONG WAIT AT THE AIRPORT GAVE ME A chance to scan the final working draft for a new Constitution. Hearings are now being held about it in the House of Representatives. I thought, therefore, that I might educate myself by scouring it for some of its more salient proposals.

I must say that—except for the articles on a unicameral Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the President—the draft leaves the current Constitution pretty much intact. But even in these four articles, so much has been borrowed from what is currently in effect—so much of which also comes from previous Constitutions.

The parliamentary form that is being sponsored has been lifted bodily from the 1973 Constitution. In other words, there is no attempt to reinvent a totally new wheel. But since parliamentarism is the core of the proposed revision, I shall discuss it after taking up the other provisions.

I start with the Preamble. The proposal copies the current Preamble and rejects the lucubrations of the Abueva Commission.

The proposed article on National Territory retains the current provision, except for the restoration of the phrase "historic right or legal title" formerly found in the 1973 Constitution. It may be recalled that the omission of this phrase in the 1987 Constitution was criticized by some as an abandonment of the Sabah claim of the Republic. I don't agree with the criticism, but let us leave it at that.

In the proposed Declaration of Principles and State Policies, the provision on "nuclear arms" has been omitted. But there is no real damage there because even the current ban on nuclear arms is not absolute. Significantly, however, the draft retains the idea that the Armed Forces shall be the protector of the people. The language is now different from that of the 1987 Constitution; but, like the 1987 text, that—I am sure—will also be criticized as a possible breeder of military adventurism.

Finally, the Declaration of Principles merely looks "towards the establishment of a federal system of government" in some future date. No concrete proposal is as yet presented for federalism. That, I suppose, is realism.

The Bill of Rights is left untouched although the proposed exclusionary rule has omitted the phrase "for any purpose." Thus, it seems that illegally obtained evidence, although inadmissible "in any proceeding," may still be admissible for other purposes.

The proposal on citizenship removes any doubt about the legality of voluntary dual citizenship. In the process, it also removes the stigma on "dual allegiance" which the 1987 Constitution found to be "inimical to the national interest." If the proposal is approved, dual allegiance will become constitutionally honorable!

The proposal for Suffrage retains the current law.

What of the Supreme Court? Deleted from the current text on judicial power is the duty "to determine whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the government." It remains to be seen how the Supreme Court will interpret the deletion. I myself have always held that the 1987 clause does not give a new power to the Court but merely emphasizes that it is not just a question of power but also a question of duty. After all, the judiciary has long had certiorari jurisdiction. The clause was former Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion's remedy for the tendency of the martial law Court to hide behind the "political questions" doctrine.

I doubt that any of the current justices asked that the magistrates' compulsory retirement age be raised to 75. If this becomes law before Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban retires, it will probably kill Justice Reynato Puno's chance to become chief justice! But then the proposal also says they will have the option to retire at 70 with full benefits.

And how will the justices be chosen? Still via the recommendation of the Judicial and Bar Council. We will not see anything like the confirmation hearings for the justices in the US Senate.

The Constitutional Commissions—Civil Service, Elections, Audit—are left untouched except for the possibility of re-appointment after the lapse of some unspecified time. It now says no "immediate reappointment."

The proposed provisions on Local Government preserve the existing provisions, but the term of elective officials will be five years with no limit on reelection. The autonomous regions are still limited to two, and what power they can have will still be dependent on Parliament as the regulator of their organic acts. Still far from federalism!

What of the protectionist economic provisions under the current Constitution? There are two major changes. As far as land ownership is concerned, the responsibility for controlling is to be given to Parliament. As to the exploration of natural resources—mining, logging, etc.—the draft opens up the possibility for participation by foreign corporations via "co-production, joint venture, and production sharing agreements." This will make the elaborate debate about the Mining Act academic.

Interestingly, the power of the government to take over the operation of businesses in times of emergency is being retained. It will be recalled that this power is of martial law provenance.

Untouched are the provisions on Social Justice, Human Rights, Education, Language, Science, Sports, and the General Provisions.

The provision on Constitutional Amendment and Revision is copied from the 1973 Constitution.

Since the Transitory Provisions are very much related to the proposed parliamentary system, I shall discuss them in my next column. But all told, expect the new document to be lengthier than what we have now.

Intimations of 'Encantadia'

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

ILIGAN CITY FOR ME IS WHERE TO FIND THE breathtakingly beautiful Maria Cristina Falls, the "hidden"—aptly named—Tinago Falls, the underwater tunnel beneath an artificial lake that the usually noisy Inquirer Mindanao bunch once passed through in utter silence, and the Macaraeg-Macapagal ancestral house.

I visited that house twice, once before and once after Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became President. In both occasions, it was a painting, more than the interesting old photos (they always fascinate me as much as old houses), that made me stay there longer, not so much for any artistic merit in the work but more out of curiosity.

The painting—if memory serves me right—showed a young Gloria, garbed in virginal white clothing designed like the robe of a Greek goddess; and reclining on the grass in a sylvan setting straight out of "Encantadia," the very enchanting TV *telefantasya* of GMA-7.

Elsewhere in the living room was a photo that I suppose the artist used as the "model" for the painting. The photo shows GMA in a strapless green dress, in the same reclining pose.

Normally, I thought, one would expect that a presidential daughter's portrait would show her seated regally on one of the ornate chairs that abound in the Palace, with a fittingly significant wall in one of the halls as a background. But why the sylvan splendor?

Why would she have herself painted in such a setting? What fantasy was she trying to turn into a reality, even if only on canvass?

The painting—and the questions—would haunt me from time to time after that, until that afternoon I was going through my INQUIRER files for the purpose of reviewing the events immediately before, during and immediately after the so-called Edsa II that unseated President Joseph Estrada and installed Ms Arroyo in the presidency.

I was shocked to notice how Ms Arroyo had aged in just a matter of five years. In the heady days of Edsa II and for a few months after that, she looked truly cute as a button, a very rare thing for a woman pushing 60. Just to make sure that my glasses were not fooling me, I got some recent issues of the INQUIRER and made comparisons.

And then my thoughts went back to the painting in Iligan and I realized how, especially in the context of the more recent issue of Charter change, it has become Oscar Wilde's portrait of Dorian Gray in reverse.

Every evil act Dorian Gray would commit was promptly recorded on his portrait—at the beginning, it showed a dashingly handsome aristocrat—in the form of a facial distortion. As time went on, Dorian's face in the portrait became more grotesque, even as Dorian himself remained as young and as handsome as the day he posed for the portrait.

Back to GMA. When the proposed Constitution, as drafted by her own Consultative Commission (itself a violation of the present Constitution) and, in particular, the transitory provisions were exposed to the light of day, everything came together in one comprehensible picture.

Everything she did from the time she plotted President Erap's downfall—all the duplicity, the lies, the bullheadedness in the face of unfavorable public opinion, the repression of all dissent, the clear violations of the Constitution—have been catalyzed into the transitory provisions to allow her to rule, all-powerful and unopposed.

The transitory provisions of **her** Constitution would pave the way for the creation of her "Encantadia," where she would reign supreme—and alone, as intimated by the painting; then reality would be bent according to her liking.

In the painting she reclines, her body elongated by the magic of the kind artist's brush, an alteration that would have caused some complicated, disproportionate relations with the other elements in the picture, had she been in a standing posture.

Sadly and unfortunately for Ms Arroyo, reigning supreme isn't all there is to "Encantadia." Over and above the *sangres*, ruling them—as, in fact, it does all true nobility—is the concept of noblesse oblige, beautifully exemplified in "Encantadia" by my favorite character Danaya (perfectly played by the incredibly lovely Diana Zubiri) who would rather die by execution as ordered by her sister the reigning queen, rather than admit to the betrayal she was accused of, and of which she was innocent. Honor dictated that she could not lie to save her life.

Neither is "Encantadia" about bending reality. In the painting, Ms Arroyo is alone, but in the "Encantadia" outside the frame that she is forcing us to accept, there are people, millions of them, who cannot and will not conform to a setting and a situation according to her illusions.

Because they too have their own "Encantadia" in their minds, not according to an artist's concept, but one that conforms to the basic guarantees of a truly democratic state: freedom from hunger, freedom of expression, freedom to express dissent in peaceful assembly, the right to choose their leaders, and all other human rights agreed upon by all freedom-loving nations.

Unfortunately, too, even as it was the portrait of Dorian Gray that became uglier with his every wrongdoing; in life, the painting in Iligan will remain as fresh and beautiful as the day it was painted (paintings can even be retouched), while Ms Arroyo ages rapidly. And belying the contrived smiles that she frequently displays lately are the scowls and sneers that have been permanently etched on her face.

What price "Encantadia"? What price the glory of the presidency? And never forget "*Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

* * *

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Learning and teaching through the Internet

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

OVER THE WEEKEND, I WENT TO BAGUIO UPON the invitation of Diwa (a publisher of textbooks) to address over 800 private high school teachers from Northern and Central Luzon. The rather grand topic I tackled was "Unleashing critical thinking through ITC." Naturally enough, the discussion had to begin with a definition of terms.

On "critical thinking," I relied on a definition from "The Art of Public Speaking," by Stephen Lucas (8th Edition), which says that critical thinking is "Focused, organized thinking about such things as the logical relationships among ideas, the soundness of evidence, and the differences between fact and opinion." I suggested that this was one of the most important challenges facing teachers in a society such as ours, in which the traditional means of authority (government, family, even religion) are breaking down. More and more, teachers are expected to take on the task of molding not only the minds but also the values of children. With the Filipino family breaking down because of outmigration, teachers have to fill in the vacuum of authority and guidance created by the absence of so many parents.

Then came a discussion of ICT: what is it? How could teachers use it? How would it make them better teachers? According to Wikipedia, ICT is "Information and Communications Technology...deals with the use of electronic computers to convert, store, protect, process, transmit, and retrieve information."

As to the second question, ICT—primarily, the personal computer and the Internet—could be used to enhance research, collaboration, information sharing and knowledge base, as well as to unleash critical thinkers. I tried to give examples on how the Internet could be useful.

In research, I discussed the challenges faced by schools and teachers when it comes to doing research. Schools are increasingly incapable of adequately investing in books, and even when they have decent libraries, students tend to go to the Internet rather than books for information. Now I do think there's no substitute for books, but the fact is, an increasing number of books are online, providing all kinds of benefits: students don't have to line up to use them, and they can easily cut and paste extracts for research and citation purposes, and so on.

The Internet also allows individuals and institutions that have much to contribute to learning to share their acquisitions and findings with the world. I gave a few examples of websites useful to students (with the proper guidance and direction from teachers, of course), including that of a European scholar who has kindly placed online the entire Leon Ma. Guerrero translation of Apolinario Mabini's "The Philippine Revolution." Needless to say, it is now virtually available to any student or teacher anywhere in the country.

As for collaboration, I tried to tackle a problem we're all familiar with in school. Say, a teacher assigns five students to do group work, for example, a report. Chances are, one student will write the report; another will show up at the first meeting and never re-appear; two will goof off, and one will subsidize the snacks. Everyone gets the same grade, which is, I told the teachers, the most concrete and depressing manifestation of the reality of politics in any student's life. What if, I asked, you could assign students to a paper, and monitor their contributions to a report—in real time if you wanted—while being able to correct their mistakes or offer guidance during the writing of the report? I pointed them to a free and quite intriguing service online called Writerly, which has the potential of offering all these advantages.

Then came the question of sharing, which should be the purpose of studying and engaging in such projects as reports. I showed the teachers a couple of websites, one on the Edsa Revolution, another on Rizal's works (made by Ateneo students), both of which showed a couple of interesting things: first, reports that passed the teacher's scrutiny aren't just shelved or thrown away but made available to the public; second, it allows the more transparent evaluation of the output of students, because it can be subjected to peer review (by fellow students or fellow teachers). A person's research efforts, I suggested by pointing to the remarkable blog of a Filipino-American, Chris Sundita (whose Salita Blog focuses on the intricacies of the vanishing languages of the Philippines), could in turn serve as a hub, where similarly minded scholars could share their findings and discuss questions relevant to their research.

I also brought up the important (in our impoverished country) task of adding to the knowledge base. If teachers and parents complain that there's garbage online, then all the more there's a need to identify and support websites that offer genuine facts, and useful data. (Quite modestly, I pointed to my own Philippine Presidency Project as an example of this.)

Finally, ranging from the blog of librarian Von Totanes to the blogs written by teachers, I gave examples that could serve as suggestions on how teachers could help turn the lessons they have learned into something useful for other teachers. The ways by which teachers can compare notes, lesson plans and strategies for effective teaching, through the Internet, are endless. I concluded the discussion by enumerating some of the benefits of integrating ICT into their teaching methods: it allows teachers to harness technology, instead of fighting or fearing it; it enables them to make an impact beyond the classroom; and it requires teachers, not just students, to grow.

All these websites are linked to my own blog, www.quezon.ph/blog, in case you'd like to visit them.

Pacquiao and poverty

COMMENTARY

Eugenia Duran Apostol

TOM THOMPSON, A SPORTS COLUMNIST WRITING OUT of New Orleans, recently said that "Here in America, you could combine Lance Armstrong, Peyton Manning, LeBron James, Tom Cruise and 50 Cent into one person and you still wouldn't have what the Philippines has in their number-one, all-time superstar Manny Pacquiao. He's that important to his people.

"As an American, I find myself somewhat envious of what the people of the Philippines have. We have nothing close to what they share with Manny Pacquiao."

Indeed, the humble *panadero* from General Santos City literally fought his way through adversity to become our living national treasure. It is easy to misread a lot of things into Manny Pacquiao's win over the Mexican legend Erik Morales. Astute politicians are naturally quick to take advantage of the media mileage that being close to Pacman brings. For most Filipinos, however, Pacquiao's stunning victory over Erik the Great served to uplift their battered spirits—albeit quite briefly. With the financial wealth that came with that triumph, he personified the marginalized Filipinos' shared dream of a way out of the poverty trap, in true *teleserye* tradition.

Yet, in one of his post-fight interviews, Manny, in all candor, said that he would prefer his two young sons not to follow in his footsteps. "*Masyadong mahirap ang boksing* (boxing is too difficult)," Pacman said. The statement brings us to the time-honored way to get ahead in life: quality education. At this point, Manny can afford to send his cute kids to the best schools here or abroad if he so desires, and he could very well do so.

His adoring multitude, meanwhile, will have to make do with sending their own children to public schools and hope for the best. Not a few of them might even prod their sons—or even daughters—to visit the local gym and spar a few rounds on their way home from school. Who knows?

Quite recently, in a commentary published by this paper, Education Undersecretary Miguel Luz credited the professional bureaucracy of the Department of Education for the agency's continuing reform program—the absence of a political appointee as education secretary notwithstanding. Presumably, the program of reforms—which is quite comprehensive—will ultimately redound to a more consistent delivery of quality education to public school pupils and students.

Luz went on to say that "the Department of Education rank and file has said over the past six months that the system needs to be run by a professional educator" like Undersecretary Fe Hidalgo, herself a former public school teacher. "The message to all our teachers would be clear and unequivocal: Teachers matter and quality education, in their hands, matters most of all," he added.

Luz also said that the DepEd continues to perform despite the fact that teachers continue to work under great handicaps. It is very encouraging to hear from somebody like Luz that the DepEd is seriously taking steps to make itself more relevant to its constituency.

When the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWW-PP) launched the Education Revolution in 2002, we wanted to encourage the private sector to take a more active role in improving the quality of public education. We believed then—as we continue to believe today—that education is too important a matter to be left entirely to government. Experience shows that when the private sector mobilizes itself at the community level to make its public schools better, dramatic improvements in learning outcomes are very attainable.

Joel Pagsanghan, the son of the inimitable Sir Pagsi of Ateneo and formerly of CODE-NGO, is an acknowledged expert on community-level social development. A few months back, we asked him to take a close look at the FWWPP's Education Revolution and see how we could make it more widespread given the prevailing conditions.

Joel saw that we already had a dual approach, which I often refer to as the two legs of the Education Revolution: the Mentoring the Mentors program, run by Ms Chinit Rufino and a team of education experts, to improve the quality of teachers; and Community Action, to make the improvement of public schools a continuing community concern. This latter program is a spin-off from the Adopt-A-School Act of 1998, also known as RA 8525.

Joel observed that a lot of elements needed for both the Community Action and the Mentoring the Mentors programs to flourish in a given community were already present. For instance, the professional bureaucracy that Luz described in his commentary has been very evident in the person of forward-thinking superintendents and school principals that we've had the chance to meet. Likewise, corporate citizens, most notably members of the League of Corporate Foundations, have long had continuing development and philanthropic activities in their respective business jurisdictions.

The problem is: "While all initiatives are good, they are not at a sufficient scale to make significant change," former Education Secretary Dr. Edilberto de Jesus, one of our trustees, pointed out.

And there lies the focus of Joel's Local Mobilization Strategy, which we call Education Revolution 2006. Simply put, Education Revolution 2006 promotes the practice of performance-based, private sector support for public schools. Several studies support the view that an increase in the volume of private sector donations to public schools does not necessarily translate into improved learning outcomes. In fact, in certain cases, such donations encourage a culture of mendicancy on the part of the benefited public schools. Joel often says that if a donor wishes to simply give a set of books to a public school, by all means the public school would accept the gift even if the latter does not have qualified librarians or even a reading program that could maximize the value of the donation. But the donation would be more meaningful if its solicitation was a consequence of the public school's strategic plan to improve itself. The donor would have every reason to be pleased, because the assistance it has extended to the public school would serve a specific purpose other than window-dressing. Conversely, the donation adds fuel to the public school's drive to propel itself toward excellence.

Education Revolution 2006 aims to address the problem of scale described by Dr. De Jesus through a conceptual framework and a very mobile corps of community mobilization officers, who are specially trained to facilitate a simplified strategic planning process among communities. The entire community mobilization process is designed to be simple and easily replicable by any private entity.

Education Revolution 2006 is by no means a panacea for the complex overarching problems facing public education. It is a first step toward the only viable, long-term option to fighting poverty: readily accessible quality education through our public school system.

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Nation still poor after Pacquiao

SUCH A BOXING EVENT CAN BLOW STRAIGHT at the face.

Of the millions of Filipinos who were enthralled by the fight between our very own Manny Pacquiao and Mexico's Erik Morales, 17 percent were hungry, 12.9 percent were jobless, 26.1 percent were underemployed and a whopping 57 percent felt they were poor. The rest who didn't watch were either curiously uninterested or were not within a day's travel to a television set or an electrical outlet.

First things first: we join the chorus of accolades from every corner of the country being heaped upon the man from General Santos City. He is amazing, and it is equally remarkable how he manages to capture the heart and imagination of an entire people. He's going to be rich, too, deservingly.

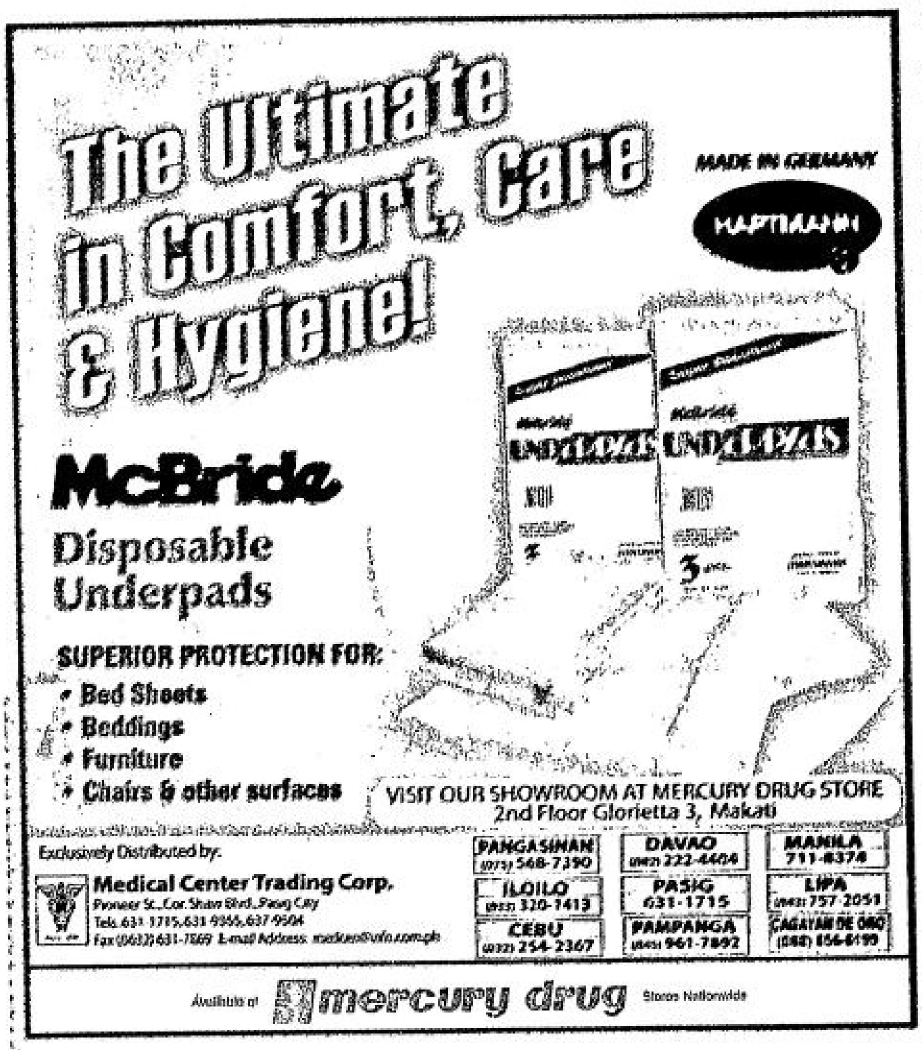
This is not the case for many of those who followed the fight on TV and radio. They may be rich in spirit, but poor in almost everything else. We thank Manny for bringing pride and honor to the country. But we can thank him for another thing—that is for making us forget our troubles for a good 30 minutes (an hour and a half if you count the commercials).

We were such in high spirits that we didn't care about the pain of hearing the unmistakable voice of our embattled President in a phone patch made immediately after the fight, in someone's obvious attempt to capitalize on the Filipino boxer's evident popularity.

But this momentary relief can also be as cruel as putting off the execution of a condemned man; it only prolongs the agony.

As we turn off our TV sets, a tide of problems comes rushing back. For the common Filipino, it would be a question of how to put decent food on the table, how to pay runaway electricity and water bills, and how to cope with the perpetual assault of oil price hikes, which are the economic equivalent of the baker's yeast—it makes the cost of everything rise (except labor's). At the same time, we anxiously watch the countdown to the implementation of the 12-percent EVAT on Feb. 1, which in fact means an EVAT rate 20-percent higher. And we wonder how much more "belt tightening" the government expects us to make in the name of "growth and progress."

—ISA ARTAJO,
chair, Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP (STAND UP),
go_wendell@yahoo.com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In Rockwell, not Las Vegas

I AM WRITING IN REFERENCE TO the Jan. 26 column, titled "Miracle," of Conrado de Quiros in your newspaper. De Quiros claimed that Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay was "among the crowd on ringside (of the Pacquiao-Morales fight) wasting taxpayers' money to see the fight up-close and personal."

We wish to state for the record that De Quiros' claim is false. Pichay watched the fight last Sunday at the Rockwell Powerplant Mall movie theater, together with Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan, Leyte Rep. Eduardo Veloso and former Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen.

We also take strong exception to De Quiros' assertion that had Pichay actually flown to Las Vegas to watch the Pacquiao-Morales fight, he would have done so using taxpayers' money. This is a highly damaging personal attack that is not only unfair but also unfounded, with absolutely no basis in fact. Pichay was a self-made and successful businessman before he bowed to the clamor of the people of his district to serve in public office. He is on his third term as their representative, and he has not sullied his hands by misuse or misappropriation of any government funds for his personal aggrandizement. We urge De Quiros to investigate the truth of the last statement.

De Quiros has stepped out of bounds with this calumny, and we ask that he issue the necessary correction, and if he is man enough, a public apology. We understand that Pichay's staunch support of administration programs benefiting our people will leave him open to periodic attacks from columnists with an anti-administration bias, like De Quiros. But we are also hopeful that the INQUIRER will see it fit to give redress when the attacks hit not only below the belt but are also entirely untrue.

—ALMARIO A. ALEJANDRIA,
political affairs officer 2,
Office of Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr.,
RVM Bldg., Rm. 406 Batasan Complex, Constitution Hills, QC

Arrogant exercise of press freedom

I TAKE EXCEPTION TO MANUEL L. Quezon III's patronizing and insulting reference to me in his column, "The long view." (PDI, 1/16/06) The reference is an example of irresponsible and arrogant exercise of the freedom of the press and journalistic power, which is not uncommon in our country. Yet media continually demand that government leaders and institutions be responsible and accountable in their exercise of power and authority.

Quezon began his column by recalling our movement in 1997, Demokrasya: Ipagtanggol ang Konstitusyon (Democracy: Defend the Constitution), which the late Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma headed and which I served as secretary general, along with Ambrosio Padilla and Solita Monsod. We were opposing a people's initiative (Pirma) to amend the 1987 Constitution in order to lift the term limits and allow President Fidel V. Ramos and other elected officials to seek re-election.

Quezon quoted our movement as saying: "Some people would amend the Constitution to do away with 'waste,' to make the government 'more responsive'; to eliminate 'gridlock'—as if these weren't government's fault."

Then he continued: "That they got nowhere is demonstrated by the fact that Abueva wanted parliamentary government and federalism so badly that he would settle for them in name, if not in fact, merely to achieve some sort of victory in the twilight of his life."

I doubt if Quezon has read in detail the Consultative Commission's proposals and justification for recommending the shift to parliamentary government and federalism after a transition that shall have established autonomous territories and regions in 60 percent of our provinces and cities.

If he had read our proposals and justification without prejudice and pre-judgment, he might have allowed himself the chance to say that a good majority of the members of the ConCom, including myself, are serious and rational in pushing for a parliamentary government and devolution, and federalism.

Is his position against changing our 1987 Constitution consistent with his attitude toward the President and the coalition in power?

I have spent the better part of my life as a political scientist finding ways to improve governance, as my published studies and advocacy show. I have sought and made use of opportunities to help bring about political and social reforms since the 1950s. I have believed in parliamentary and decentralized government since my stint as secretary of the 1971 constitutional convention.

Why does Quezon feel the urge to judge me so casually and negatively, and so personally and publicly through his column? I wonder.

—JOSE V. ABUEVA

Nasty politics on FG's appearance

I REJOICED WITH MILLIONS OF Filipinos over the spectacular win of Manny Pacquiao, whose roots can be traced to my hometown, over Mexican legend Erik Morales.

However, I was upset with the way some of our opposition congressmen and columnists—who portray themselves to be upright before the public eye—infused nasty politics into the appearance of the First Gentleman atop the ring and the subsequent phone call of President Macapagal-Arroyo to congratulate a victorious Filipino.

I am humbly asking the Filipinos, particularly the Cebuanos, to pray—in the same way that we prayed for Pacquiao's victory—for these congressmen and columnists to abandon an envious and resentful heart.

—NEIL L. PAPAS,
San Isidro, San Fernando, Cebu

FINDING THE POOREST OF THE POOR

The Philippine government is serious about meeting its poverty reduction targets. The National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) is now actively providing direction for the monitoring of poverty incidence in the country - to once and for all know, where the poorest of the poor are.

Today, the NAPC is launching three studies improving the poverty assessment system of government, with particular emphasis on the vulnerability and social protection aspects. The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) was assisted by the NAPC through a fund from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to come up with an improved model to be used for the Annual Poverty Incidence Survey (APIS).

This is just the start of NAPC's thrust to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment that would make poverty reduction planning and programming in the country effective and efficient. The target is that by Year 2010, poverty incidence in the country would just be 17% - or half of the current figure of 34%.

NAPC Secretary General Datu Zamzamin L. Ampatuan shall be joined by UNDP Resident Representative Kyo Naka for the presentation of the three publications at the UP Bahay ng Alumni.

Semirara cleanup urgent, says PCG

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE CLEANUP OF THE MASSIVE OIL SPILL AT SEMIrara, Antique needs to be done more quickly to reduce the risk of damage or death to the fuel-coated hectares of mangroves and other marine life.

Pointing out that only six percent of the affected area had been cleaned a month after the Dec. 18, 2005 incident caused by a National Power Corp. barge, Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Joseph Coyme said more workers are needed to fast-track the operation to remove the oil from 236 hectares of mangroves.

Thus, Coyme said the PCG will talk to the Napocor about the importance of finishing the cleanup as soon as possible. The PCG is supervising the operation, which Napocor is required to fund and undertake.

"We will inform them that there is a need for many workers to be involved in the cleanup to speed it up," Coyme said in an interview.

Only 50 workers were initially employed by Napocor to undertake the removal of 198,000 liters of spilled fuel, Coyme said.

Later, Napocor sent 100 more workers. However, Coyme said the PCG expected that the work force for the massive oil spill would consist of some 400 men.

Since most of the fuel had spilled on mangroves, the workers were tasked to coat the trees with an oil dispersant, then sprayed with water to remove the fuel, which drifts out into the sea.

The cleaned mangroves were surrounded with an oil spill boom to prevent the fuel from adhering to them again.

The oil removed from the trees was expected to be washed off to the sea. Coyme said this oil would pose no harm to the environment because it had been treated with a dispersant, which breaks it down and lets its components evaporate.

Coyme also expressed fear that if the cleanup's pace did not improve, it may take a year until all the spilled oil is removed.

"While the oil stays there, what will happen to the marine life? What will happen to the community that depends on the sea for livelihood?" he asked.

He added that the longer the oil stayed on the mangroves, the bigger would be the chance for these to die.

The PCG said there was no threat of an oil spill from the grounding of an Indonesian cargo vessel at the Apo Reef Natural Park in Occidental Mindoro early this week.

The cargo vessel ran aground on Monday reportedly due to the rough seas caused by a low-pressure area.

According to its agent, AN TAT Shipping Corp., the MV Marthen developed engine trouble while passing Mindoro Strait and immediately dropped anchor. However, because of the strong winds and big waves, the vessel drifted and hit the reef.

Commodore Efren Sabas, commander of of the PCG's Southern Tagalog District, reported in a statement that the MV Marthen was unlikely to leak fuel into the sea and the marine habitat as the vessel did not sustain any major damage.

Nevertheless, the PCG would push through with an inquiry on the incident to determine if it was caused by *force majeure*.

Coyme also said a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources vessel loaded with PCG personnel was positioned near the Indonesian vessel to monitor the latter's condition.

"We just want to be sure there would not be any oil slick in the area," Coyme said.

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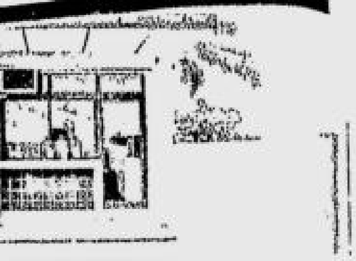
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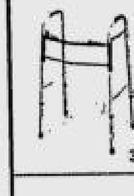
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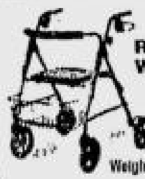
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Isabela declared under calamity state

ILAGAN, ISABELA—THE PROVINCIAL BOARD has declared the province under a state of calamity after floods destroyed at least P452 million worth of corn and rice crops.

Led by Vice Gov. Ramon Reyes, the board approved the declaration in a special session on Friday.

Reyes said it would authorize the provincial government to use its calamity fund to help families whose farms were destroyed by the floods.

Danilo Tumamao, provincial agriculturist, pegged the losses in corn at P367.41 million in Isabela's 28 towns and Cauayan City.

He cited reports from 17 towns and Cauayan showing that the floods wiped out at least P84.9 million worth of rice crops.

Hardest hit were the towns of Ilagan, Tumauini, Echague, Alicia, San Mariano and Jones, and Cauayan.

Tumamao urged farmers to plant high-yielding crops, such as cowpeas, mongo, vegetables and melons to avoid further losses.

Reports from the regional monitoring center of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) in Tuguegarao City in Cagayan said low-lying villages in at least 10 Isabela towns and Cauayan remained under water.

In Cagayan, reports from the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council showed that the sudden floods destroyed at least P200 million worth of palay and corn, livestock and infrastructure facilities.

The reports said parts of Tuguegarao and the towns of Solana, Enrile, Iguig, Alcala, Gattaran, Tuao, Piat, Lallo and Amulung had remained under water.

Tuguegarao Mayor Randolph Ting said the floods destroyed at least P12 million worth of corn and rice in the city.

Gov. Edgar Lara has ordered Cagayan mayors to coordinate with the social welfare officers in their town to prepare drinking water and food for residents displaced by the floods.

Villamor Visaya Jr. and Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

DRAGON FOR BUDDHA
Baguio City's Chinese community, celebrated the New Year with a dragon dance, delighting the cityfolk.

Nursing grads hit withholding of board exam results by PRC

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE THUNDER OF ATI-ATIhan drums, a hearse, protest placards and more than a hundred people wearing black shirts greeted spotlessly dressed nurses who took their oath on Jan. 25 in a hotel here.

Those in black, numbering 145, should have joined the oath-taking of new nurses but they were unable to do so because the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) withheld the results of their board examinations in December last year.

The protesters were among 567 nursing graduates from West Negros College (WNC) in Bacolod City, half of whom were professionals who took up nursing as a second course.

Among the examinees were physicians, lawyers, teachers and computer science graduates. Some of them are married and have been working, but hope for bigger salaries by practicing as nurses abroad.

Earlier, they sent a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo, asking her to intervene in the release of results of their nursing board examinations.

The PRC said 604 names had been withheld, pending investigation of discrepancies in their student records, including overloading or taking more academic courses than what are normally allowed in one semester.

Remedios Fernandez, a member of the Nursing Board who presided the oath-taking ceremony here, said she did not know when the PRC would release the test results.

She said the investigation was still ongoing and that she could not discuss the issue because cases had already been filed against the board and PRC.

On Monday, 145 examinees filed two court petitions for the release of results of the nursing board examinations held on Dec. 3-4 last year. If they passed, they asked that they be allowed to take their professional oath.

The examinees said the PRC and the Nursing Board's decision to withhold the test results was "arbitrary, capricious, malicious, whimsical and illegal."

The following day, Judge Guilljie Delfin-Lim of Branch 22 of the Regional Trial Court here ordered the Board of Nursing and the PRC to answer the petitions within 10 days.

PRC regional director Lily Ann Baldago earlier recommended the investigation of 62 examinees to determine the "truthfulness and validity" of their nursing education after she noticed excessive loading of courses, ranging from 40 to 46 units in one semester; enrollment of prerequisite subjects in the final semester of the course; simultaneous enrollment of prerequisite subjects and related learning experience; and questionable "scrubs" or major and minor surgeries assisted and handled.

Baldago sent her recommendations to the Board of Nursing, which then sent to the PRC for approval.

Baldago said the examinees should keep their patience. "The PRC is not sleeping on the concern," she said.

But Baldago admitted that the investigation could take some time. She cited the inquiry into the test results of 73 nursing board examinees that were withheld in December 2004, which had yet to be completed.

GSIS under fire over E-card glitch

SORSOGON CITY—HUNDREDS OF government employees in Sorsogon and Masbate have lambasted the Government Service Insurance System office here after failing to withdraw money from banks using the electronic card issued by the government agency.

The employees said they had not been able to use the E-cards since the start of this month as the automated teller machines (ATMs) of different banks here rejected the cards.

The depositary bank of the GSIS is UnionBank, whose nearest branch is in Legazpi City, 55 km from this capital city.

Juditha Gozu, GSIS Legazpi manager, said one of the reasons for the failed transactions was the "traffic system" that usually occurred when there were so many E-card users in any ATM machine.

"Also, some of the users do not have updated premium dividend records in their accounts, which is very important to determine if one could enter into a particular transaction," Gozu said.

The GSIS members flocked to the GSIS office to register their complaints of not being able to withdraw money.

Some, they said, had lost deposits after several ATMs debited amounts from their accounts without releasing cash.

GSIS information officer Choy Genavea admitted that a glitch had developed but that they had already informed the main office about the problem.

The local GSIS office serves at least 20,000 members from Sorsogon and Masbate.

Employees of the municipal government of Magallanes led by union president Ruben Conda have sent a complaint to GSIS President Winston Garcia demanding immediate solution.

They said the GSIS should revert to the old manual system, contending that the E-card system was not reliable.

The E-card is useless as it has no other function, except as an ATM card, and now it could not even be used as such, they pointed out.

The employees said the E-card also meant additional expenses to them as they had to travel to UnionBank's branch in Legazpi and wait for long hours for the processing of transactions requested by hundreds of GSIS members.

If the member was not served, he or she had to come back the next day, they added.

When the INQUIRER visited the bank on Friday, about 50 persons coming from as far as Catanduanes were waiting in line for ATM transactions.

A student, who refused to be identified, said he was not able to go to school because he had to wait for his turn to get his mother's GSIS dividend. His mother did not have time to do so as she was working, he said.

Although the E-card is a member of Megalink, he said, it could not transact in other Megalink member-banks.

A regional director of a government office here asked his night security guard to withdraw from the ATM late in the evening, thinking that only a few people would be transacting by then.

When the guard arrived at the bank at 2 a.m., he found 10 people still standing in line.

Some of the members were not yet registered in their website www.gsis.gov.ph, where they can legally and successfully log in for any transaction, Gozu said.

"Our recommendation is for members to register in this website, go directly to our office and conduct business there if they could not withdraw, or they can call our trunk line 1800-10-888-4747." *Bobby Labalan and Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Comelec orders city mayor to vacate post

LEGAZPI CITY—THE COMMISSION on Elections Second Division on Jan. 23 ordered Mayor Noel Rosal "to peacefully vacate the mayor's office the soonest possible time."

The resolution said 2004 mayoral candidate Michael Victor Imperial had 2,143 more votes over Rosal, making Imperial the winner in that election. Rosal said "I have my right to judicial remedies." *Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Republic of the Philippines
City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City
Tel. No.: (062) 992-7763

Solicitation No.: CW-06-0123-001

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Construction of Covered Shed at Commercial Center, Bagsakan, Sta. Maria, ZC
(Name of Project)

Construction of roofed shed & stalls, calling for masonry, carpentry and electrical works with painting
(Brief Description of Works)

1. The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA, through the General Fund (Supplemental Budget) FY-2005 intends to apply the sum of SIX MILLION FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P6,451,500.00) ONLY being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Construction of Covered Shed at Commercial Center, Bagsakan, Sta. Maria, ZC. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA now calls for the submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for *Construction of roofed shed & stalls, calling for masonry, carpentry and electrical works with painting*. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC and to meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before February 8, 2006 at Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City and secure the Eligibility Documents there from. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day of the submission of the accomplished eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents on February 8, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. in the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and is restricted unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Office, City Hall, Zamboanga City on or before February 8, 2006 at 10:00 A.M.
5. Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. starting February 8 to 22, 2006.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchase by Bidder that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00. The Bidding documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before February 22, 2006 at 10:00 A.M.
7. The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on February 22, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. in the City Engineer's Office, Conference Room, City Hall, Zamboanga City.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before March 8, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Cash, Check, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check payable to the City Treasurer, Bank Draft, Irrevocable Letter of Credit and in an amount of P64,515.00 or Bank Guarantee in the amount of P96,772.50 or Surety Bond in the amount of P161,287.50 or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on March 8, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at 10:00 A.M. in the City Engineer's Office, Conference Room, City Hall, Zamboanga City.
9. Completion of the Works is required by Two Hundred Three (203) calendar days.
10. The CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division
Milagros WS. Saavedra
City Hall, N.S. Valderosa Street
Zamboanga City
Tel No. (062) 991-0862
Telefax No. (062) 992-7703
(PDI – January 23 & 30, 2006)

(Sgd.) DR. MARIO D. ARRIOLA
BAC Chairman

1970s fashion marks FQS commemoration

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—STUDENT ACtivists here relived the turbulent First Quarter Storm (FQS) through fashion, copying the way the *aktibistas* of the 1970s dressed during the 36th anniversary program of the FQS at the University of the Philippines Baguio on Friday.

The FQS refers to a period of unrest in the country marked by a series of demonstrations and protest marches against the government from January to March 1970, two years before strongman Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law.

Members of the theater group Tanghalang Bayan ng Kabataan (Tabak) sashayed through a catwalk wearing bright body hugging shirts, wide collared polo, bell bottom and corduroy pants, mini skirts, fishnets, beads and large sunglasses, courtesy of the city's *ukay-ukay* (used clothing) shops.

The fashion show was an opening activity for a forum on the FQS that was attended by FQS participants and students here on Friday.

"We were like them [when we were students] from 1968 to 1970. [We sported the] the hippie look," said Luzviminda Dionisio, who participated in the FQS when she was a 19-year-old student leader of the Philippine College of Commerce in Manila (now the Polytechnic University of the Philippines).

Angelo Guizon, a Tabak member, said the group chose the 1970s' look because they wanted to relive the youthful exuberance and idealism of the FQS participants.

He said they found a parallelism between the activities of student activists critical of Marcos in the 1970s and those assailing the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo today.

"In the course of [our] struggle for social change, we use any form of cultural work to call for democracy. We did not turn our backs on the spirit of the FQS," Guizon said.

"Only the tag 'martial law' disappeared as Filipinos remain poor and suffering, we still have a corrupt president and human rights violations still exist. The conditions are no different from those prevailing during the FQS," he said.

In the forum, Dionisio said the lessons of FQS remain alive among many students.

"FQS activists realize that the solution to the country's crisis is not through a change of leadership in the government," Dionisio said.

She said student activists in her time went out of their way to protest the injustices committed by the Marcos regime.

She said the protests led by students, workers and professionals in Metro Manila spread like wildfire in different parts of the country.

"People have been saying that student activism is already passé. But our situation shows that the country still wallows in crisis," said Katrina Nisperos, chair of the Nationalist Corps in UP Baguio.

ROUNDUP

Bar owner hurt in blast

COTABATO CITY—An improvised bomb went off in Carmen, North Cotabato on Wednesday night, injuring the owner of a videoke bar. Col. Ruperto Pabustan, commander of the Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade, identified the victim as Nonoy Amora. The bomb, left by two unidentified persons inside the bar in Barangay Poblacion, exploded at about 7:30 p.m. "The kind of explosive used was designed only to scare the owner," Pabustan said.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

P45M for Cotabato airport rehab

COTABATO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has approved the release of at least P45 million for the immediate repair and rehabilitation of the Cotabato airport in Maguindanao. Cresente Ferofino, president of the Cotabato Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the repair of the airport was "long overdue."

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Cagayan milkfish hatchery launched

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Agriculture officials launched in Claveria, Cagayan the first satellite milkfish hatchery in Cagayan Valley on Jan. 25. Agriculture Undersecretary Cesar Drilon said the hatchery in Barangay Taggat would make the region self-sufficient in milkfish supply and reduce the need for importation of fry. Claveria Mayor Pablo Bolante Jr. donated a one-hectare lot for the project.

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Anti-mining caravan in Calapan today

CITY OF CALAPAN—After the floodings, thousands of Mindoreños are expected to join an anti-mining caravan that will converge in Pola town in Oriental Mindoro today. Led by the provincial government, the Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan and Alyansa Laban sa Mina, the caravan commemorates the fourth year of the passage of the 25-year mining moratorium in the province. Pola, hometown of Vice President Noli de Castro, is the planned site for the processing of plant and land-based tailings dam of nickel mining by Crew Minerals.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

S. Damian; 93

SERAFIN DAMIAN, of Tarcan, Baliuag, Bulacan died on Jan. 27 at the age of 93. He is survived by his children Letty, Per, Celia, Elvie, Baby, Atoy, Nene and Tess. His body lies at the family residence at 182 Rixal St. Tarcan, Baliuag, Bulacan. Interment will be at 2 p.m. after the 1 p.m. Mass at the Tarcan Chapel on Jan. 31 at the United Memorial Park in Taal, Pulilan, Bulacan.

Truth about Garci controversy must be pursued—CBCP

From page A1

ment "with humility and an open mind," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo was "open to all just and fair means under the law to ferret out the truth surrounding all controversies affecting the presidency."

"She wholeheartedly supports the renewal of our public life through moral values, national solidarity, the ascendancy of truth, the welfare of the poor and heroic Christian citizenship," Bunye said.

The CBCP plenary produced two statements—on "renewing our public life through moral values" and on "mining issues and concerns" about claims of massive environmental damage and displacement of indigenous peoples in affected areas *(See story on front page.)*

Said Ipil Bishop Antonio Ledesma, CBCP vice president: "It is still a wide open search for truth and we do hope that with some moral orientation, we can really reach the bottom of this problem."

The root of the problem, the 119-member CBCP said, was a "crisis of moral values, a crisis of truth and justice, of unity and solidarity for the sake of the common good and genuine peace."

Transactional politics

"Truth has become a victim of political partisanship as well as of transactional politics," said the statement read by Archbishop Lagdameo of Jaro, Iloilo, to reporters at the news conference broadcast live by several radio stations. He said the statement was addressed to Ms Arroyo and all Filipinos.

The latest pastoral statement was ostensibly more to the point than the one issued last July at the height of the wiretapping controversy. The CBCP then said that it could not join mounting calls for the President's resignation but she should not dismiss those calls altogether.

The Church's refusal to join the resignation calls and former President Fidel Ramos' declaration of support for Ms Arroyo were largely credited for saving her administration last year from its worst political crisis since she came to power following the ouster of President Joseph Estrada.

The CBCP suggested that the search for truth be done through the Ombudsman, Commission on Audit, Commission on Human Rights, Sandiganbayan, Congress and citizens' groups.

Need for probity

But it made clear that these bodies must first be "led and run by credible people, persons of integrity and probity."

Last month, Ms Arroyo's handpicked Consultative Commission recommended the scrapping of the 2007 elections to pave the way for the adoption of a federal-type parliamentary system in 2010.

On this issue, she has locked horns with Ramos who, while supporting the shift to parliamentary system to provide Ms Arroyo with a "graceful exit" amid a cloud of doubt over her legitimacy, has insisted that the balloting next year should proceed as scheduled.

"Elections in 2007 should not be cancelled," the four-page CBCP statement said. But it said "confidence and trust in our political processes have to be restored."

"As a first step, we strongly urge our political leaders to undertake electoral reforms posthaste. The Commission on Elections has to be transformed into a competent and reliable body beyond reproach," the CBCP said.

Comelec resignation calls

"The call for resignation or even prosecution of a number of the commissioners should not be lightly brushed aside. The electoral process, including the counting of votes, needs to be reformed and modernized before the next elections," it said.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos has rejected calls for his resignation, including one made recently by Sen. Joker Arroyo's blue ribbon committee over shenanigans in the commision's automation program.

Abalos has insisted he could only be removed through impeachment as provided for in the Constitution.

The CBCP agreed that certain aspects of the Constitution probably needed revision. But any changes, it said, should be made only after "widespread discussion and participation" among all stakeholders.

"This is best done through a Constitutional Convention," it said. "The reasons for constitutional change must be based on the common good rather than on self-serving interests or the interests of political dynasties."

Asked what action the Church would take if the President ignored the CBCP's calls, Lagdameo said: "We will cross the bridge when we get there."

Coups denounced

In resolving the political crisis, the bishops reiterated their call against any form of violence or counterconstitutional means. "These measures would only bring about new forms of injustice, more hardships and greater harm in the future," they said.

Bunye said Malacañang was committed to implementing electoral reforms through "concrete programs," appointments to the Comelec of people beyond reproach and "stern enforcement of the rules of suffrage."

He said the Palace supported "full participation in all aspects of Charter change, transparency and relative serenity that allows for rational discussion and debate." *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

CBCP calls for repeal of Mining Act of 1995

From page A1

der the Arroyo administration, which claims that a revived mining industry could help propel the economy's takeoff.

"Our mining potential is ten times our national gross national product. It can easily wipe out our foreign debts and yet leave more for future generations," Ms Arroyo said in December last year.

The perennially cash-strapped government last year said it estimated a windfall of up to $90 billion in foreign investments in the mining industry with 23 major mining projects in the pipeline.

The Church has been at the forefront of efforts to stop the legislature from opening up the mining industry and has waged a legal battle to have the Mining Act of 1995 declared unconstitutional.

But in December 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that the mining law was constitutional, lifting the final obstacle for foreign companies in the industry.

As it is, Ms Arroyo's "Mining Revitalization Program" is not doing any good by encouraging the entry and operation of large-scale mining by transnational corporations, the CBCP said.

Dislocation

It said "mining tenements" granted through the program had encroached into 17 important biodiversity areas, 35 national conservation priority areas and 32 national integrated protected areas.

"The promised economic benefits of mining by these transnational corporations are outweighed by the dislocation of communities, especially among our indigenous brothers and sisters, the risks to health and livelihood and massive environmental damage," the CBCP said.

The prelates pointed out that mining areas, such as those in Caraga, Bicol and the Cordilleras remained among the poorest in the country.

Rapu-Rapu

In response to complaints they received, especially from indigenous peoples, the bishops also called on the government to stop its 24 priority mining projects.

Ditto with large-scale mining projects such as the Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project in Albay, HPP Project in Palawan, Didippio Gold-Copper Project in Nueva Vizcaya, Tampakan Copper-Gold Project in South Cotabato, Canatuan Gold Project in Zamboanga del Norte and the San Antonio Copper Project in Marinduque.

The latest pastoral statement reiterated the concerns raised by the CBCP in its 1998 statement titled "A Statement of Concern on the Mining Act of 1995." Since then, a number of prelates have been very vocal about the supposed evils of the law.

The bishops said the environmental tragedies and incidents triggered by mining "belie all assurances of sustainable and responsible mining that the Arroyo administration claims."

One of the biggest mining disasters in the country happened in Marinduque in 1996 when an accident sent millions of tons of open-pit mine waste into a river.

The Marinduque mine, operated by Placer Dome's partner Marcopper Mining Corp., was closed by the government. Without compensating the people, Placer Dome left the country.

Last year, the provincial government filed a lawsuit in Nevada against Placer Dome, accusing it of damaging the environment and the health of residents.

The latest mining accident happened on Rapu-Rapu Island. Effluents containing high levels of cyanide were released last year from tailing dams into adjacent bodies of water, causing fishkills in the coastal community, according to fishermen.

Members of the Lakas Mangingisda ng Bicol are collecting signatures as part of a campaign to have the mine operated by Australian firm Lafayette Mining Inc. closed permanently.

The project has been touted as the flagship project of the revived mining industry in the Philippines.

Human rights violations

Mining has also led to the violation of human rights, according to the bishops.

"Increasing numbers of mining-affected communities, Christians and non-Christians alike, are subjected to human rights violations and economic deprivations," they said. "We see no relief in sight."

Reacting to the CBCP statement, Michael Defensor, incoming presidential chief of staff, said Malacañang "recognized that responsibility in mining should be practiced."

Defensor, the outgoing environment secretary, said the government was doing everything to address the concerns of the bishops.

He assured the bishops that the Palace would "maintain strong coordination" with the people, communities, nongovernment organizations and the Church in keeping vigilance over these mining projects. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

MEMBERS of the Kaama-amahan Kaina-inahan of Rosario, La Union, hold a ritual in which a person must pass under their flag to symbolize willingness to undergo spiritual healing in Sitio Wawa, San Rafael, Rodriguez, Rizal. RAFFY LERMA

'Moral recovery' fight launched

From page A1

zation, the Moral Recovery Officers Foundation (MROF), retraced the Katipuneros' steep trail to Pamitinan and had its newly elected officers take their oath in rituals that merged folk religiosity and secular goal-setting.

The MROF is chaired by Dr. Consolacion Alaras, a former Carmelite nun and now an English and literature professor at the University of the Philippines.

A former official of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, Alaras has been a firm believer in the ancient Filipino concept of "*pamathalaan*" or God-centered governance. The term is a conjunction of "*pamahalaan*" (government) and "*bathala*" (God or creator)."

Alaras is a strong advocate of "ancestral spiritual movements," mostly obscure, rural-based religious groups that tend to veer away from mainstream Catholic doctrine and which many Filipinos would usually dismiss as cults.

Under the professor's direction, the oath-taking on Jan. 22 incorporated "consecration" rites performed by members of the Kapatiran Katipunan Rizalistas, a mostly female fellowship from Rosario, La Union, led by a recognized visionary, Carmen Madlambayan, 45.

With just around 10 members, this band of white-robed pilgrims has been silently praying for the country's moral renewal for decades, at times even walking barefoot across entire provinces as part of their petitions, according to Alaras.

The group has figured in religious gatherings advocating pamathalaan, including one that was graced by then President Fidel V. Ramos who, ironically, is a Protestant.

Flashes of insight

Alaras said the MROF could act as a bridge for messages uttered by the likes of Madlambayan, which are usually drawn from dreams, trances or sheer flashes of insight.

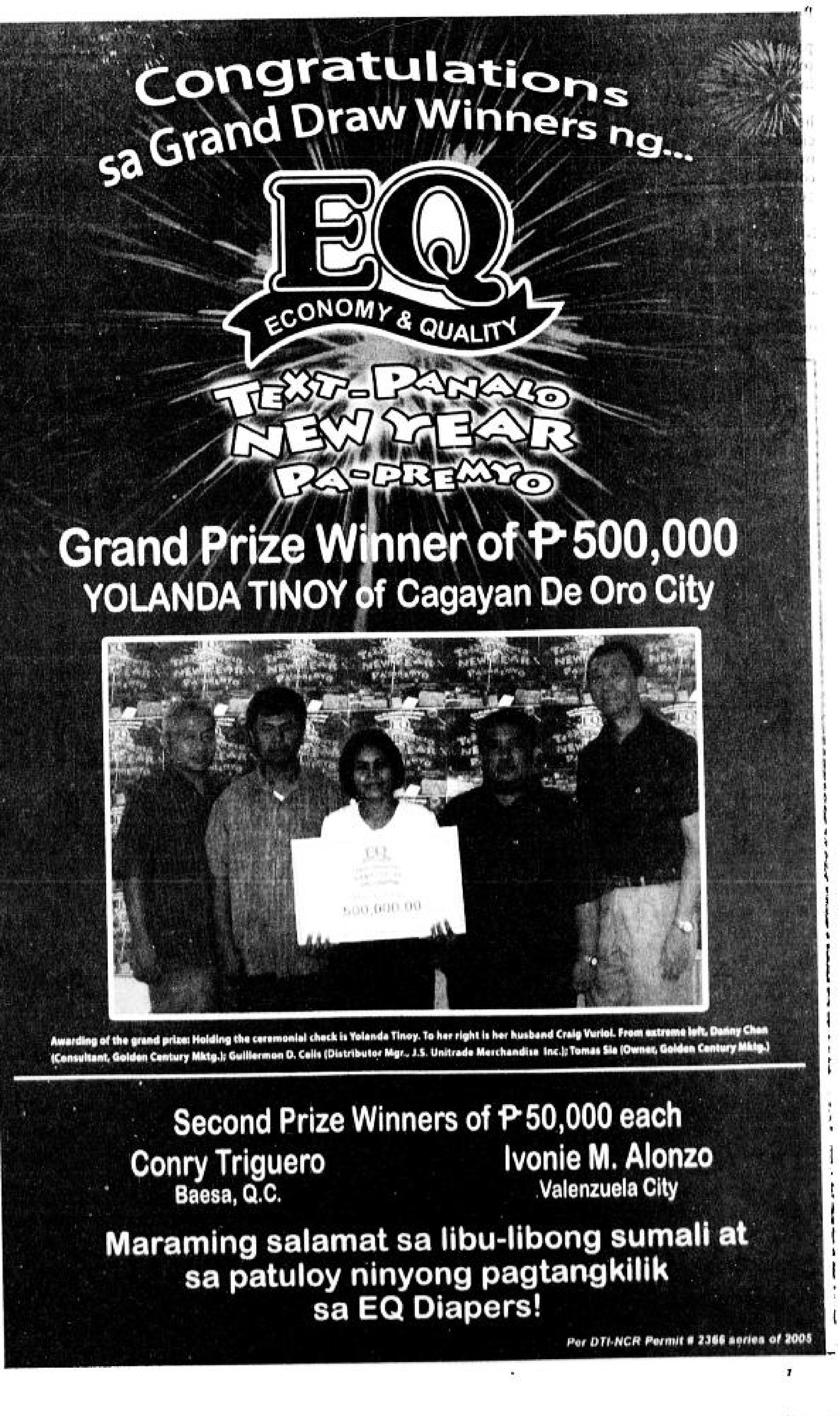
Through them, the ancestral concept of the pamathalaan survives despite their having been "treated shabbily in our history," she said.

Alaras said the foundation would wage campaigns seeking to "remind ourselves that the pamathalaan is the founding concept of our ancestors and heroes when they were struggling for our freedom."

Most of the other MROF officers are middle-level officials in various government agencies, such as the Office of the Ombudsman, Securities and Exchange Commission, and the environment, public works and interior departments.

They are Rene Sonaco (assistant chair), Delilah Magdael (treasurer), Rosario Gulmatico (assistant treasurer), Guadalupe Oliveros (secretary), Ma. Macrina Teano (assistant secretary), Lourdes Estonanto (auditor), Meriam Caldez (assistant auditor) and Jovel Mendoza (PRO).

Also taking part in the ceremony were Mayor Pedro Cuerpo of Rodriquez (formerly Montalban) and other town officials, as well as several students of Alaras at UP.



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Per DTI-NCR Permit # 2366 series of 2005

Plaza Miranda tragedy revisits Liberal Party

From page A1

and is seething from the rivalry for the country's presidency between Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Manuel Roxas II, grandson of the late president.

Both are impatient to fast-track their path to Malacañang. That is tragic irony No. 1.

The other irony, more morbid and ghastly, flows from the Plaza Miranda bombing, which is the overpowering trauma that haunts the LP.

The memory revisited the party as it held two anniversary celebrations on Jan. 19 at different venues—one at Plaza Miranda by a faction of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, the LP chair, and the other at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City in a conference convened by Drilon, LP president.

It does violence to accuracy to call either faction a "fake."

To quibble over which is fake or not begs the question over the objective reality that the rival meetings reflect a deeply fractured party at a time when it had begun to reestablish itself as a political force that can redefine the shape of Philippine politics. This follows the gains made by the LP as an ideology—and policy-based party in the 2004 congressional elections. That is irony No. 3.

Election net gainer

The party increased its seats in the House of Representatives to 29 in the 2004 elections, from 20 in the 12th Congress, making it the net gainer compared with other parties. The gain signaled the resurrection of the long moribund party and its emergence as a viable pivotal bloc that could swing the balance of power in the House and as the core of a policy-based coalition.

The party's factional imbroglio can only stifle its promise as a party of reform and its development into a key political player in the shifting alliances of the 13th Congress in the midst of the crisis of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In an effort to bridge the rift, the LP elder statesman, former Senate President Jovito Salonga, sent a message read in his absence by Quintin Doromal, saying that "today, we are divided once again, but it is my hope and prayer that like brothers, we can disagree without being disagreeable."

At the same time, Salonga took a swipe at Ms Arroyo, saying that there was a need to resolve the question of the legitimacy of her presidency, suggesting that it was the issue that drove the wedge between Drilon and Atienza.

Spiritual, symbolic seat

The issue of whether Ms Arroyo won the election fairly should be resolved, Salonga said. "There should be an end to the senseless squabbles and bickering" crippling the nation, he said.

Significantly, Salonga's statement was read at the Plaza Miranda celebration, not at Drilon's assemblage at Dusit Hotel.

Plaza Miranda is spiritual and symbolic seat of the LP. It is there where the blast changed the course of Philippine history.

The blast not only cleared the way for the declaration of martial law in 1972. It ended the decades' long elite civility in electoral politics, although there were later allegations that it was the New People's Army of Jose Maria Sison—not the obvious suspect, President Ferdinand Marcos—which bombed the rally to pit the elite factions against one another.

Regarding the Drilon-Atienza rift, the latter has a stronger claim to the party's identity. He has paid his claim with blood. Atienza was one of the party officials wounded in the bombing, with Salonga, who was mutilated, surviving the carnage.

Atienza was on the stage during the rally, running for councilor of Manila. Another wounded casualty was Sen. Gerry Roxas, Senator Roxas' father.

LP newcomers

Drilon and his Senate cohorts joined the LP before 2004. Although the LP was part of Ms Arroyo's KNP coalition in 2004, the rift opened when Drilon broke away from the President on July 8, 2005 to join the call of civil society groups for her resignation.

Atienza denounced the decision as unilateral, reached without party consultation. The July 8 party defection, as well as the desertion of key Cabinet members, highlighted the clashing loyalties of Drilon and Atienza, who backed the President.

The reasons of Drilon for withdrawing support—alleged corruption and tampering with the election process—are not the issue. These had festered before the July 8 crisis.

Drilon stood to gain from the collapse of the Arroyo administration and resignation. Such contingencies could pave the way to the presidency. He is third on the constitutional line of succession, in case of a resignation of the President or a snap election under which he could serve as a caretaker head of state in a transition arrangement (assuming the legal obstacles to these processes are overcome).

And now comes Roxas.

Playing a careful game

In topping the 2004 Senate elections, Roxas was well-placed on the path to make a credible bid for the presidency in 2010. Both he and Drilon seem to believe the presidency was within reach.

Roxas has played a careful game of avoiding creating obstacles to obstruct his path. He recently made statements distancing himself from the President by posturing as an independent-minded senator on controversial issues.

But Drilon made a costly tactical error. He figured out that by joining the movement for Ms Arroyo's resignation, the LP's defection would be the decisive blow that would topple the regime. Drilon overestimated the strength of the party.

Similar fatal miscalculations were made by former President Corazon Aquino and the renegade "Hyatt 10."

Drilon's LP faction punched above its weight. They did not reckon with former President Fidel V. Ramos' and the Catholic bishops' swing to the President. Ms Arroyo has held on to power through default of her enemies who choked to deliver the death blow. Now Drilon's hold on the Senate presidency appears precarious.

AFP not buying lawyer's line on Faeldon meeting

From page A1

The military is still tracking down four other Oakwood mutineers who bolted their Fort Bonifacio detention cell on Jan. 17, reviving fears of a fresh military challenge to President Macapagal-Arroyo. *(See related story on Page A18.)*

"She wanted to give the impression that the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces knew what she was doing," the senior officer said. "She wanted to give that impression during her casual conversations with military lawyers."

Possible charges

"But that's not true," said the officer, referring to Rivas' superiors knowing that she was meeting Faeldon clandestinely.

The officer agreed to disclose information about the progress of the interrogation on condition of anonymity. The officer had direct knowledge of the operations that led to the capture of Faeldon and Rivas, and of the tactical interrogation of the duo.

For allegedly keeping Faeldon's whereabouts from her superiors, the military is preparing charges against Rivas ranging from violation of Article of War 97 (conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline) to violation of the Code of Ethics for Public Office and the Code of Ethics for the Legal Profession.

Two shadows become one

Both Faeldon and Rivas have remained tight-lipped about why they were together when arrested and both have asked for lawyers, according to the officer.

Based on the senior officer's account, this was how the military captured its quarry:

On Friday night, intelligence men tailed Rivas to SM North Edsa mall, where she was met by someone "wearing a woman's dress" inside a car.

"There were questions if it was really Faeldon because he wore a wig and a woman's dress," the officer said.

"If two persons are inside a car, you'd see two heads. But the two heads became one," he said, adding this gave those tailing Rivas the impression that the pair in the car were kissing.

On board a red Toyota Corolla, Faeldon and Rivas proceeded to Monumento in Quezon City and then to Tugatog, Malabon.

Grabbing the wig

By this time, their pursuers had put two and two together and deduced that the "other woman" was Faeldon. Their car, after all, seemed to be heading toward Rivas' studio-type apartment on Prosperidad and Prayle streets in Tugatog.

On reaching Tugatog and sensing they had a tail, Faeldon and Rivas backed up and tried to speed away. But they were blocked by another vehicle.

Intelligence officers surrounded the car. Cornered, Faeldon casually asked the officers what they wanted.

"The officers grabbed his wig, and, of course, it was Faeldon," the INQUIRER source said.

The officer said that after Faeldon escaped last December, Rivas spoke with intelligence officials and denied any romantic ties with him. If at all, she said they were mere "badminton mates," said the officer.

Shaver needed

Rivas was placed under surveillance two weeks ago.

"After she spoke with intelligence officers in December, she probably got the impression that she was already off the hook," the officer said.

Faeldon's lawyer, Roel Pulido, who spoke with his client on Saturday at the Isafp compound, said the officer had "gained a little weight but was otherwise healthy."

Faeldon asked for a shaver, he said.

"He said he sensed he was being tailed and tried to speed away, but was caught in a traffic jam. He said he got careless, and that he should not have gotten careless," Pulido said.

During his visit, Faeldon relayed the message that Rivas wanted Pulido to be her lawyer.

No time to relax

"I have to talk to her and see if there is a conflict of interest," Pulido said.

AFP spokesperson Col. Tristan Kison said the police and the Armed Forces were "doing everything" to get the four other fugitive Magdalo soldiers.

Bunye said Faeldon's arrest "was a significant accomplishment but right now we should not relax."

"What's important is that the AFP continues to monitor and analyze the developments," he said.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the next five months would be "critical" for the Arroyo administration.

He said he believed Ms Arroyo's foes would wage their next battle in Congress by filing another impeachment complaint.

Lakas Rep. Mauricio Domogan said he believed it was just a matter of time before the four mutineers would also be captured. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac*

10,800 pupils brush teeth in bid for Guinness . . .

From page A1

oral hygiene, organizers said.

Guided by 187 dentists, the pupils, coming from eight elementary schools in Metro Manila, used soft-bristle toothbrushes for nearly three minutes and then playfully tossed into the air the red caps given by organizers.

The mass brush-off, sponsored by a toothpaste company and Philippine health and education officials, was an attempt to break the Guinness World record set by 10,240 Chinese students who simultaneously brushed their teeth along a road in Shenzhen City in China on Sept. 20, 2003, the organizers said.

"We also want to make oral cavity prevention relevant to the general public," said dentist Angel David II, who helped organize the event.

Tooth decay and poor oral hygiene are prevalent among many young and adult Filipinos, either because of poverty or a lack of awareness of healthy practices, David said. *AP*

THOUSANDS of children brush their teeth simultaneously in an attempt to set a world record in a mass brush-off.

ERIK ARAZAS

Group vows to continue fugitive's fight

HE DID NOT START THE fight "and it need not be him who will end it."

That was the defiant message which Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon's group posted on his website after the escaped mutineer's capture on Friday night. *(See related story on Page B6)*

In its statement, the group—calling itself Pilipino—vowed to carry on the struggle to bring down the Arroyo administration.

Time to make a stand

Pilipino showed photos of Faeldon inside another military camp, suggesting that he was not alone in running the website.

"It's time to make a stand. Let's not allow this fight to come to waste," Pilipino said. "This is all our fight, not just Captain Faeldon's."

The group released compact discs containing photos and video clips of Faeldon supposedly at the Central Command headquarters in Cebu City. The photos showed him reading a newspaper. Behind him was the statue of Lapu-Lapu.

Military spokesperson Col. Tristan Kison said Faeldon never entered Cencom and was just at the nearby Mariott Hotel.

Pilipino said the photos were taken "to prove that there are still many decent soldiers and cops inside camps."

It said Capt. Candelaria Rivas, who was arrested with Faeldon, was just one of the officers Faeldon had been talking to. *Luige A. del Puerto*

Part of Iraq rehab funds gambled away in RP

From page A1

and outright fraud.

In some cases, auditors recommend criminal charges be filed against the perpetrators. In others, it asks the US ambassador to Iraq to recoup the money.

Dryly written audit reports describe the Coalition Provisional Authority's offices in the south-central city of Hillah being awash in bricks of US$100 bills taken from a central vault without documentation.

It describes one agent who kept almost US$700,000 in cash in an unlocked footlocker and mentions a US soldier who gambled away as much as US$60,000 in reconstruction funds in the Philippines.

"Tens of millions of dollars in cash had gone in and out of the South-Central Region vault without any tracking of who deposited or withdrew the money, and why it was taken out," says a report by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, which is in the midst of a series of audits for the US defense and state departments.

Much of the first audit reports deal with contracting in south-central Iraq, one of the country's least hostile regions. Audits have yet to be released for the occupation authority's spending in the rest of Iraq.

Chaotic occupation

The audits offer a window into the chaotic US-led occupation of Iraq of 2003-04, when inexperienced American officials—including workers from President George W. Bush's election campaign—organized a cash-intensive "hearts and minds" mission to rebuild Iraq's devastated economy.

But the corruption and incompetence documented in the reports reveal that much of the effort, however well-intentioned, was wasted.

The failure of the rebuilding effort has been borne out most vividly by the rise of a virulent anti-American insurgency that has claimed most of the 2,237 US military lives lost since the war began.

In some cases, auditors could find no trace of cash, much of which came from Iraqi oil revenues overseen by the occupation authority.

"Those deficiencies were so significant that we were precluded from accomplishing our stated objectives," the auditors said of US officials in Hillah being unable to account for US$97 million of the US$120 million in Iraqi oil revenues earmarked for rebuilding projects.

An October 2005 audit found documentation for the spending of just US$8 million of that money.

Deadly negligence

Negligence proved deadly in at least one case. Three Iraqis plummeted to their deaths in an elevator in the Hillah General Hospital that was certified to have been replaced by a contractor who received US$662,800.

Also in Hillah, occupation officials spent US$108,140 to replace pumps and fix the city's Olympic swimming pool. But the contractor merely polished the old plumbing to make it look new and collected his money.

When the pool was filled, the water came out a murky brown and the pool's reopening had to be canceled. The reports did not identify the contractors involved.

Auditors have asked the US ambassador to recover a total of US$571,823 that the reports describe as overpaid funds.

In some cases, cash simply disappeared.

Two occupation authority field agents responsible for paying contractors left Iraq without accounting for more than US$700,000 each. When auditors confronted their manager and asked where the money was, the manager tried to clear one of the agents through false paperwork.

"This appears to be an attempt to remove outstanding balances by simply washing accounts," the auditor said. The two agents were not identified and there was no word on whether the pair were referred for prosecution.

One report describes mismanagement of more than 2,000 small contracts in south-central Iraq worth US$88 million. Occupation staff members or those they supervised handed out millions to companies that never submitted required competitive bids or that were paid for unfinished work.

Other cases

Other examples cited in the reports:

- Only a quarter of US$23 million entrusted to civilian and military project and contracting officers to pay contractors ever found its way to those contractors.
- One contractor was paid US$14,000 on four separate occasions for the same job.
- Of US$7.3 million spent on a police academy near Hillah, auditors could account for just US$4 million. They said US$1.3 million was wasted on overpriced or duplicate construction or equipment not delivered. More than US$2 million was missing.
- US personnel "needlessly disbursed more than US$1.8 million" of the estimated US$2.3 million spent for renovating the library in the Shiite holy city of Karbala.
- The library contractor delivered only 18 of 68 personal computers called for and did not install Internet wiring or software. The computers worked only as stand-alones.
- The US-led security transition command spent US$945,000 for seven armored Mercedes-Benzes that were too lightly armored for Iraq. Auditors were able to account for only six of the cars.
- At one point, several paying agents kept cash inside the same filing cabinet in the Hillah vault. One agent took US$100,000 from another's stack of cash to clear his own balance. "This was only discovered because the other paying agent had to make a disbursement that day and realized that he was short in cash," the report says. *AP*

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MMDA cracks down on 'habal-habal'

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN THE MIDST OF HEAVY METRO traffic, they alone continue to move, sliding in and out of the narrow spaces in between vehicles.

But luck may soon run out for the so-called *habal-habal*, private motorcycles being used as public transport, which are increasingly becoming popular among commuters who must "fly" to their destination.

Worried about the dangers it may pose to the commuting public, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has begun a crackdown on these illegal motorcycles-for-hire, the agency's traffic chief said yesterday.

"There is a need to put them under surveillance. And we are already apprehending the violators we see on the road, because we've received many reports about their illegal operations," said MMDA Traffic Operations Center (TOC) Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios.

He said their traffic enforcers have been deployed to places where *habal-habal* are known to operate.

"It's hard to distinguish between private motorcycles and those for hire, but through surveillance, we will be able to detect those taking one route habitually, with different passengers every time. Once we get proof, that's the time we move in," explained the traffic chief.

The *habal-habal* first became popular in rural areas in Visayas and Mindanao. The two-wheeled public conveyance reached Metro Manila last year, and came to the attention of traffic authorities three months ago, Vergel de Dios said.

"The [rider] and the driver both benefit because the passenger gets to his destination fast, and the driver earns money," he added.

Based on the monitoring of the MMDA-TOC, one known route of the *habal-habal* is from the Edsa-Ayala Avenue intersection in Makati City to Fort Bonifacio in Taguig.

The passengers are charged P20 each.

"Their operations are illegal. You could only use motorcycles as public transport if you have a sidecar," said Vergel de Dios, referring to tricycles.

Reports of *habal-habal* operations in Metro Manila came at a time when the growing number of private motorcycle owners has become a road safety concern.

Accidents involving motorcycles have risen steadily in the last four years. Last year, the number of cases in the first three months was more than double the total number of accidents for the entire year of 2004.

The database of the MMDA's Metro Manila Accident Reporting System showed that road accidents involving motorcycles totaled 4,156 last year, up by almost 150% percent from the 2004 figure of 1,706 incidents.

Despite the risks, motorcycle users have continued to increase, based on figures of the Land Transportation Office (LTO). As cited by the MMDA in a report, the LTO received 60,462 applications for motorcycle registration in the first half of last year.

METROBRIEFS

Man, son arrested for rape

A 57-YEAR-OLD man and his son were arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) last week for allegedly raping a 10-year-old schoolgirl five years ago. The suspects were identified as a certain Isaac Sr. and his 25-year-old son, both residents of Las Piñas City. Investigation conducted by the NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division (AFCCD) headed by lawyer Elfren Meneses showed that the girl, now 16 years old, was raped by the two men on separate occasions. The victim's mother sought NBI assistance and the case was subsequently investigated by the bureau's Violence Against Women and Children Division. An NBI medico-legal report showed that the girl had indeed been raped. The suspects were arrested in their home last Wednesday after NBI agents received information on their whereabouts. Charges for violation of Republic Act 8353 or the Anti-Rape Law in relation to Republic Act 7610 or the Anti-Child Abuse Law were filed against the Isaacs in the Department of Justice. Both suspects are now detained at the NBI jail.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Hostage-taker shot dead

A JOBLESS teenager was shot dead after attempting to stab his nephew during a hostage-taking incident in Pandacan, Manila shortly after midnight yesterday. Suspect Dennis de la Cruz, 19, of 1901-K Interior 100-D Zamora St., Pandacan, was declared dead on arrival at the Ospital ng Maynila shortly after the incident. SPO2 Edison Bertoldo of the Manila Police District (MPD) Homicide Section said the hostage-taking incident begun after the suspect, who was drunk, started creating trouble in front of his house at around 12:30 a.m. When barangay chair Estaquio Balaguer rushed to the scene with several policemen, the suspect had already taken his 7-month-old nephew hostage. Police said that after 30 minutes of negotiations, the suspect suddenly tried to stab the boy with a kitchen knife. PO2 Alexis Cardinez of MPD Station 10 then shot De la Cruz in the head to prevent the latter from killing the baby, police added. Bertoldo said the baby was safely rescued after the incident.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Court of Appeals marks 70th year

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban will be the guests of honor at the 70th anniversary celebration of the Court of Appeals (CA) on Feb. 1. The celebration will begin with a Mass at 9 a.m. followed by a speech from CA presiding Justice Ruben T. Reyes, SC associate justice. Former CA presiding Justice Cancio G. Garcia will be given an award of distinction, along with court employees who have served for 30, 35 and 45 years, said Justice Conrado M. Vasquez, chair of the anniversary executive committee. In the afternoon, justices, officials and CA personnel will show their talents in a musical presentation titled "Pitumpu Na Po ang Court."

Marikina to enforce safety measures in gas stations

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE NEXT TIME YOU SEE SAFETY REminders posted in gasoline stations in Marikina City, take them seriously.

The City Council has approved an ordinance slapping fines and other sanctions on motorists, as well as gasoline boys and gasoline station owners, who disregard safety measures while refueling vehicles.

"This is for the safety of our motorists and also to level the playing field by requiring all gasoline stations to follow the law," Councilor Jose Fabian Cadiz, who proposed the ordinance, told the INQUIRER.

Many gasoline stations usually have safety reminders posted in the premises, but these are often ignored.

The ordinance prohibits the following:

Safety reminders

- Igniting a lighter or a matchstick in the compound (of the gas station);
- Using mobile phones while refueling;
- Refueling a vehicle while the engine is still running, for which both the customer and the attendant shall both be liable;
- Refueling a motorcycle while a customer is still riding in the vehicle, for which both the customer and the attendant shall be liable; and
- Using an unauthorized plastic container for buying fuel, for which both the customer and the attendant shall be liable as well.

The ordinance also orders gasoline station owners to post the safety reminders in conspicuous places.

Motorists and attendants who violate the safety measures would be slapped with a P1,000 fine or a six-hour community service, or make a compulsory blood donation to the City Health Office.

For gasoline station operators and owners, a violation of any provision in the ordinance would mean a fine of P1,000 for the first offense, P2,000 for the second offense and P3,000 for the third offense, along with the revocation of their business license.

The ordinance also seeks to deputize teams from the City Fire Station, the City Police, the Traffic Management Unit, the City Public Safety and Security Office and the City Transportation Management and Development Office to hold regular but unannounced inspections of gasoline stations in the city to enforce the ordinance and accost violators.

Security guard found dead in LRT station

By DJ Yap

A SECURITY GUARD OF THE LIGHT RAIL Transit (LRT) system's Line 2 was found dead in one of the toilets at the Betty Go-Belmonte station in Quezon City at dawn yesterday.

It was not immediately clear, however, if the victim, identified as Edsil Galabin, was gunned down by an assailant, or had shot himself in the head, as no witnesses had come forward.

The police said Galabin, 31, was chatting with fellow guard Mercedita de la Cruz near the cash room on the second floor of the north-bound station when he excused himself to go to the toilet at a few minutes past 5:30 a.m.

Minutes later, the other security guards heard a gunshot coming from the toilet.

Galabin was discovered by his co-workers lying on his back with a gunshot wound in the head, according to a report by SPO1 Crescenciano Bajao of the Quezon City Police District criminal investigation division.

His service revolver, a .38 Armscor, was found near his head. The gun had five live ammunition and a spent shell.

Armed Forces and Police Savings & Loan Association, Inc.
(Authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)

The Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc (AFPSLAI) completed 2005 marking its 33rd year of operation with a Php5.9B in net income and has maintained steady growth in this aspect over the last 4 years. AFPSLAI assures its members of the Association's stability and profitability.

The Association has consistently sustained its robust financial condition and is in no way dependent on the performance of other institutions. The assistance it has provided to its subsidiaries has been extended well within the norms of any business undertaking and as duly supported by its Management and the Board of Trustees.

Rest assured that the prudent use of its resources as seen not only through fair returns on the capital contributions, the improvement of its facilities and assistance given to deserving beneficiaries are tangible proofs that AFPSLAI will be here to serve and maintain its leadership in the industry in the years to come.

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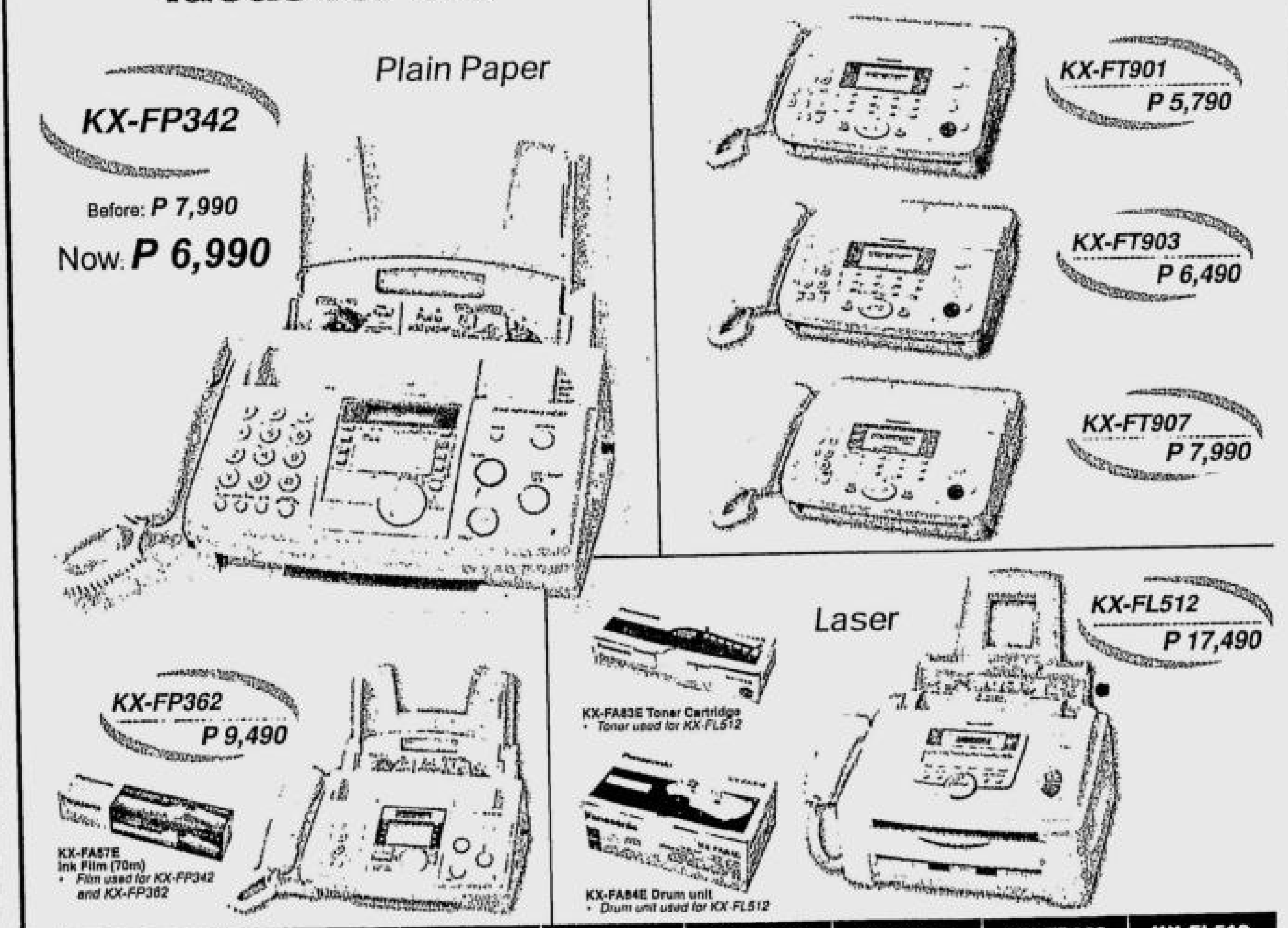

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Crime down last year in Makati City

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE NUMBER OF CRIMINAL INCIDENTS IN Makati went down last year, an achievement that the city's police have attributed to an effective anti-crime campaign.

From 597 cases in 2004, the number of crimes decreased to 435 cases last year, a decline of 27 percent, according to the Makati Police Department's (MPD) accomplishment report .

"This is because of our vigorous campaign against crime, and the help of the barangay and people in the community," said MPD deputy chief for administration, Senior Supt. Efren Ysulat.

He added that the continuous implementation of their anti-crime program, including constant police visibility through round-the-clock and city-wide foot and mobile patrols, backed by community vigilance, have proven effective in deterring criminality in Makati City.

Based on the MPD report, the cases of both index and non-index crimes went down in 2005.

Index crimes include murder, homicide, physical injuries, robbery, theft, and rape. Non-index crimes, on the other hand, refer to car theft, vagrancy, alarm and scandal, illegal possession of firearms, estafa, malicious mischief, threat and coercion, among others.

Cases of index crimes totaled 324 last year, 78 incidents fewer compared to 2004, while non-index crimes numbered 111, down by 43 percent compared to 2004 figures.

The MPD, meanwhile, reported a two percent hike in its crime solution average, solving 413 out of the 435 criminal cases last year or a solution efficiency of 95 percent.

In 2004, the police solved 553 out of 597 crime cases.

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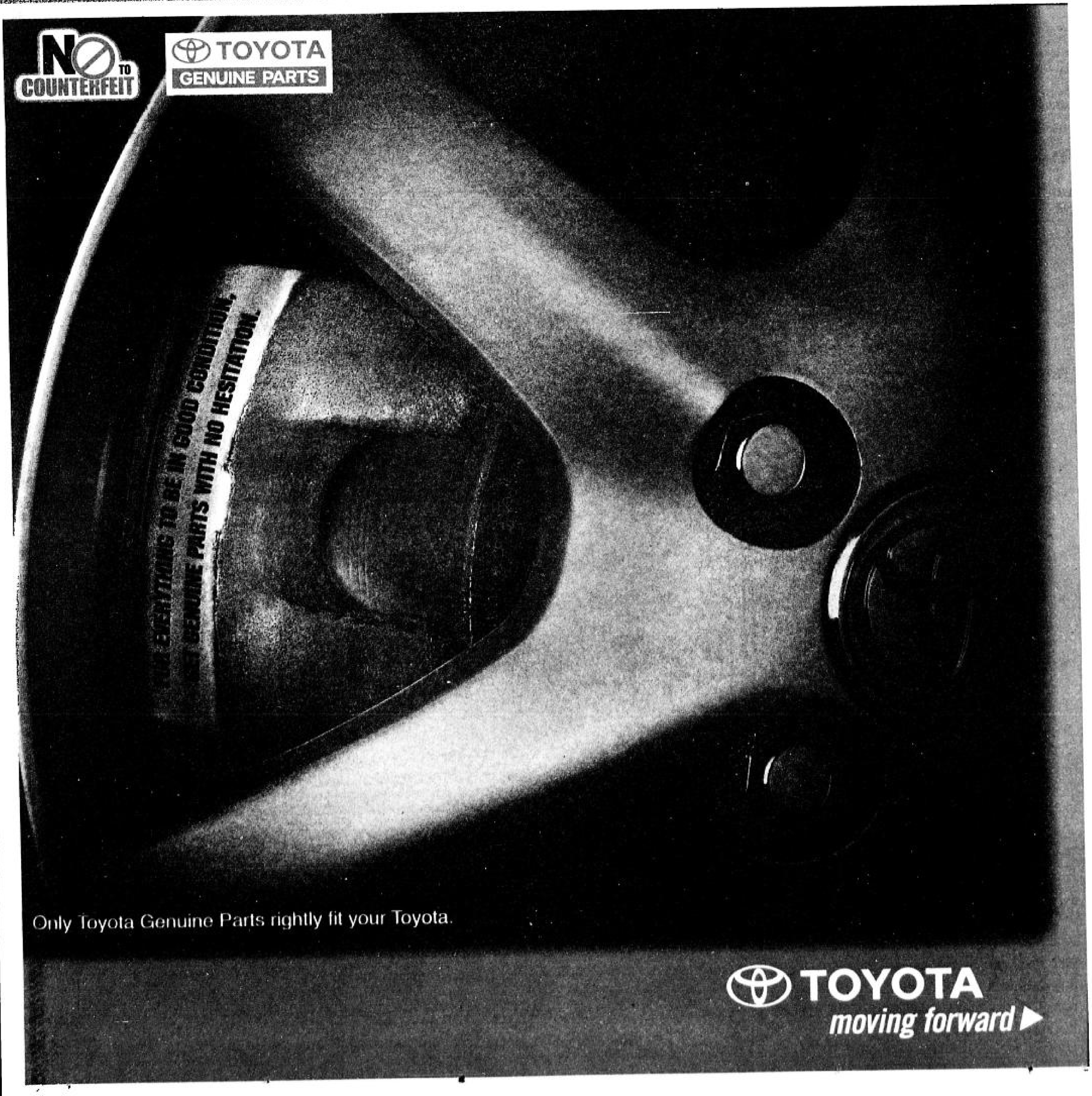

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(see B2, page 3)

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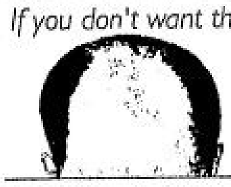

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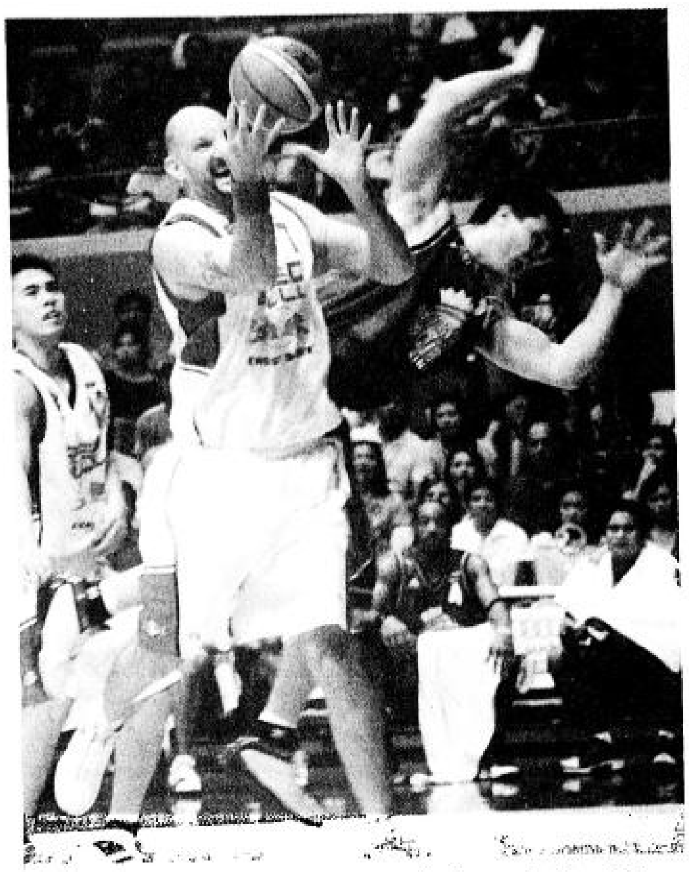


A DRIVING Mick Pennisi of Red Bull Barako draws a foul from Eric Menk of Barangay Ginebra in last night's game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Red Bull, Purefoods zero in on title clash

By June Navarro

RED BULL, STARRING ENRICO VILLANUEVA, moved on the threshold of reaching the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Cup title series after an 88-85 Game 4 victory over Barangay Ginebra yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:40 p.m.—Air21 vs Purefoods
7:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs Barangay Ginebra

The bull-strong Villanueva scored Red Bull's last six points to cap a great rally that had the Barako overhauling an eight-point deficit at 77-85 in the final two minutes to take a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series.

Purefoods Chunkee nearly squandered a 26-point lead before surviving Air21, 100-90, to grab a similar 3-1 lead in the other semifinal clash.

Marc Pingris registered a career third double-double by posting a career-high 23 points and 16 rebounds. Kerby Raymundo and Noy Castillo paced the Giants with 24 points each.

Villanueva first nailed a jump hook off Romel Adducul and then a putback of his own miss to put Red Bull ahead to stay, 86-85, with 6.7 seconds left.

Mark Caguioa then missed a floater from the corner, and Villanueva, who grabbed the rebound and was fouled by Aris Dimaunahan, put in two free throws with two seconds left to round out scoring.

Rookie Mike Holper sealed Ginebra's fate with an errant inbound pass on what could have been the potential game-tying play.

"You're not going to find a grittier team than Red Bull today," said coach Yeng Guiao, who vowed to close out the series on Wednesday.

Gloom descended on the Barako when James Penny was ejected for getting a second technical foul on Caguioa with the Kings ahead, 81-74, 4:27 remaining.

But, two possessions later, Ginebra's Chris Porter picked up his last foul off Topex Robinson in a loose ball situation.

"James had his worst game tonight because he got frustrated with some of the calls. But we've proven one thing—that this team doesn't win by depending on the import alone," said Guiao.

While Penny struggled, rookie Larry Fonancier had another superb evening after breaking his career-high 22 points in Game 3 two nights ago with a 25-point output.

Dimaunahan erupted for 16 points in the fourth, including three triples as the Kings built a 78-69 lead.

The scores:

First Game

RED BULL 88—Fonacier 25, Villanueva 21, Penny 14, Pennisi 12, Robinson 5, Bugia 4, Valenzuela 3, Baguio 2, Torion 2, Tugade 0.

GINEBRA 85—Dimaunaham 18, Helterbrand 18, Porter 13, Caguioa 9, Menk 9, Adducul 5, Ferreria 4, Santos 4, Macapagal 3, Holper 2.

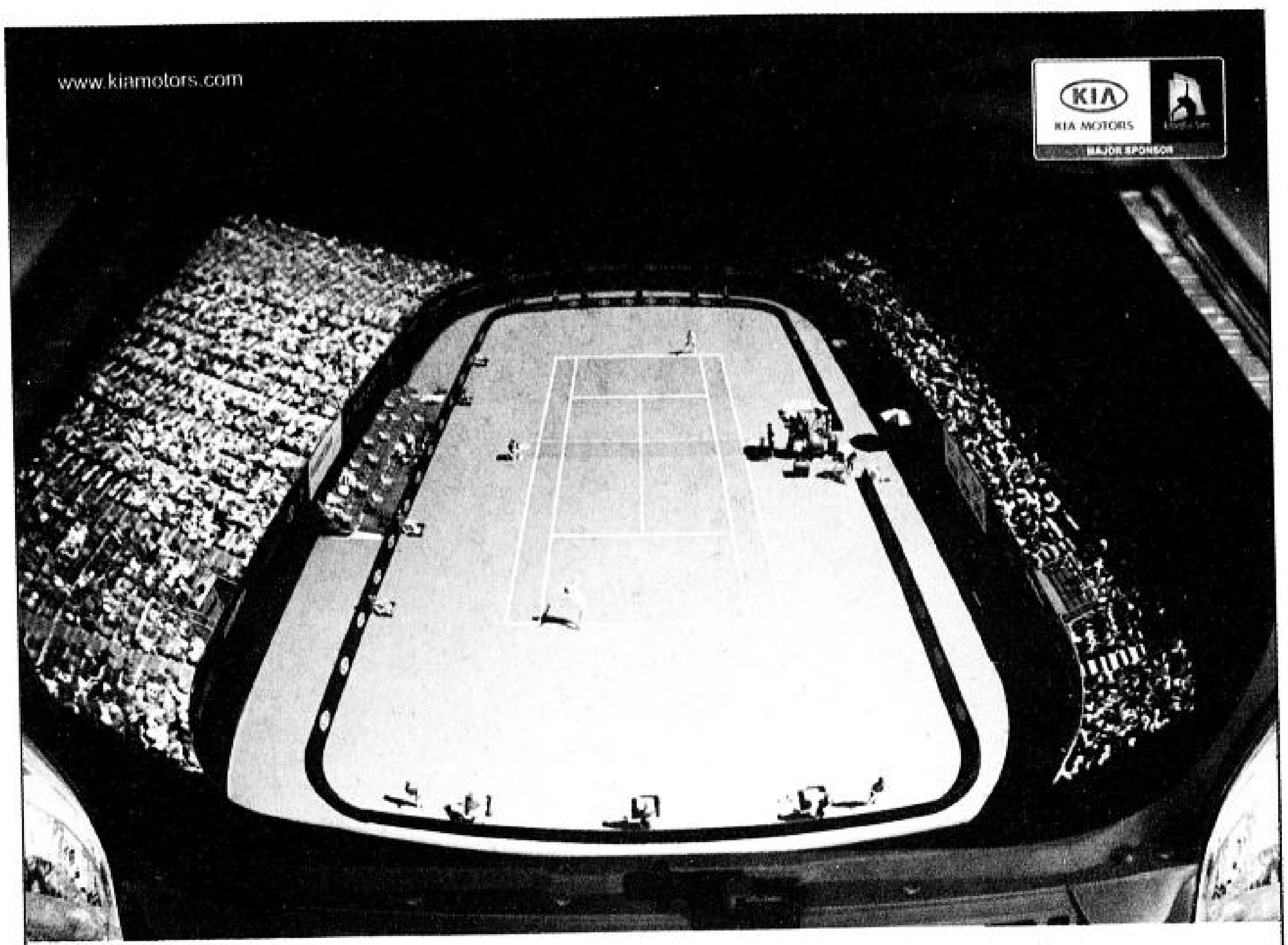
Quarters: 20-14, 39-34, 63-58, 88-85

Second Game

PUREFOODS 100—Raymundo 24, Castillo 24, Pingris 23, J. Yap 15, Chandler 10, Salvador 2, Limpot 2, R. Yap 0.

AIR21 90—Daniels 23, Ritualo 23, R. De Ocampo 12, Arboleda 9, Ferriols 8, Canaleta 7, Tubid 4, De Ocampo 3, Gonzales 1, So 0, Fran 0.

Quarters: 30-16, 49-29, 70-64, 100-90



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Wizards, Painters gird for PBL title showdown

GAMES THURSDAY (*San Andres Gym*)
2 p.m.—Granny Goose vs Harbour Centre
(Knockout for third place)
4 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Magnolia (Game 1 Finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

MAGNOLIA ICE CREAM MAY BE IN THE finals of the PBL Heroes Cup but the Wizards still feel their bitter defeats in the elimination round.

"It think it was a good experience," said coach Koy Banal of their three-game skid. "It was a wake-up call.

"We became complacent. When we were up at 7-1, it was like there was no more challenge. Then, after our three losses, the challenge was there again. But I believe that everything that happens to us has a purpose."

With the surprising slide, the Wizards slipped to second place after dominating almost the entire conference.

And the experience is expected to motivate the Wizards when they battle Rain or Shine in a best-of-five championship showdown starting Thursday.

Banal hinted, though, that his Wizards aren't still in top form after their exhausting semifinal duel against tough Granny Goose.

BANAL

GARCIA

Magnolia claimed Game 1 with a thrilling 98-97 double overtime win last Thursday. Two days later, the Wizards again needed two extra periods to subdue the Tortillos, 92-86.

"Just a few more practices and we'll be ready for the finals," said Banal.

Coach Caloy Garcia, however, doesn't see his Elasto Painters claiming the upper hand, even if it seemed like the Wizards are still in the process of regaining their old dominating form.

Garcia, too, wouldn't acknowledge that momentum is on their side after the Painters streaked to their seventh straight victory, the longest winning run this conference.

The Painters narrowly edged Harbour Centre, 69-67, in the semifinal opener. But they convincingly wrapped up the series with a 69-59 triumph in Game 2.

"There's no clear advantage," said Garcia.

"Both teams (Magnolia and Rain or Shine) deserve to be in the championship. We're 1-2 (in the elimination). It's a good and even matchup."

TEAM PHILIPPINES
INQUIRER
FILIPINO OF THE YEAR 2005

SALUTE TO HEROES AND HEROINES: Members of Team Philippines share their victory with the Inquirer which voted them Filipino of the Year. ROMY HOMILLADA

'You're all super heroes'

By Jasmine W. Payo

DIVER SHIELA MAE PEREZ APPARENTLY HASN'T BEEN TOO CAUGHT UP with her success.

Since becoming the face of the victorious Team Philippines, the comely triple gold medalist of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games still gets goosebumps from all the attention.

"*Anong sasabihin ko?* (What will I say?)," Perez asked no one in particular after she was requested to speak in behalf of the SEA Games' medalists during the tribute dinner for the The Filipino Athlete, the INQUIRER's 2005 Filipino of the Year, last week.

But, perhaps, Perez was right.

There really was nothing much to say. For 10 days in 2005, they had already convincingly shown what Filipino athletes can do.

Well-documented were their stirring performances that gave the country its first overall championship—via a haul of 113 gold, 84 silver and 94 bronze medals—in the biennial meet among the region's cream-of-the-crop athletes.

But worth noting, too, was how their triumphs—from the swimming pool to the billiards table to the tennis court—gave Filipinos a sense of pride and lifted the nation's sagging morale.

"You were all an inspiration to watch," said INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez over a cozy dinner at the third-floor lobby of the INQUIRER office last Wednesday.

"We appreciate how much all of you put into the game to bring honor to the country," added Prieto-Romualdez

"Despite all the country's problems, you showed that we can be winners."

The decision came easy for the INQUIRER editors, who overwhelmingly voted Team Philippines to receive the honor bestowed by the newspaper to a living Filipino who made the most positive impact on the life of the nation for the year.

"*Taga-hanga ninyo kaming lahat* (We're all your admirers)," said INQUIRER editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc.

Yet most of the athletes confessed they feel overwhelmed that the accolades continue to come even if the Games had ended over a month ago.

"We should really be the one thanking you," said singer Viktoria, gold medalist in the muay thai competition.

Perez, too, profusely thanked the INQUIRER editors and staff, most of whom were happy to get a glimpse of the pretty champion diver.

But, of course, the nation is more grateful to this driven and dedicated set of athletes, who pulled off the awe-inspiring feat and gave Filipinos something to cheer about by year's end.

As Jimenez-Magsanoc succinctly put it: "Super heroes *kayong lahat* (You're all super heroes)."

Hefty ₱29M at stake in Philracom's major races

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE RACING COMMISSION IS dangling a total of P29 million in the 27 major races it is putting up for the year, starting with the Open Stakes on Feb. 19 at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

The Triple Crown series, which starts in May, as well as the Juvenile and Classic Open Championships in December will be the highlights of the Philracom's schedule for the year. Each race offers P2 million in prizes with P1.2 million going to the winner.

And with several horseracing groups like the Marho, Philtobo and the Klub Don Juan also hosting stakes races of their own, the top owners are now working double time to get their chargers in tip-top shape.

All-time high prizes

However, some owners think producing a champion runner is more fulfilling in this season of all-time high purses.

"It's the prestige of your horse being called a champion that has the biggest impact for me," said sportsman Hermie Esguerra, whose views were shared by billiards patron and noted breeder Aristeo "Putch" Puyat.

"When you know that you've bred a special horse, it gives you a different kind of high," Puyat said. "It is part of the sport. And you feel that you are a part of that horse's win even if you don't own that horse."

Esguerra is not wasting time. He is getting his top local colt Real Spicy, into battle shape this early.

Real Spicy on Friday established a new track record at the Santa Ana Park, clocking 1 minute 29 seconds over 1,450 meters in a regular outing—even if the first major race that the son of Real Quiet out of Spicy Tale is looking forward to is the P1 million Philracom Chairman's Cup on March 19.

Brightest female hope

Puyat, on the other hand, is the breeder of Juggernaut, the juvenile champion last year by Mr. Sutter out of Plate Lady. Many think she is the brightest female Triple Crown hope in years.

Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag is credited for the industry's close to P9 billion in sales last year which resulted in more than P1.4 billion in taxes for the government.

Dilag noted that his agency was given a budget of only P35 million by Malacañang last year, which included the Philracom's day-to-day expenses and the task of making the racing calendar attractive to the horse owners.

"The aim of the Philracom is to raise the bar every year for the horse owners," Dilag told the INQUIRER recently.

"Because horse owners produce top-caliber horses that produce top caliber races, the betting public will benefit from it in the long term."

Unbeaten Mayol stops Morales protégé, gains WBC title crack

UNDEFEATED FILIPINO RODEL MAYOL YESTERDAY gained a chance to vie for the World Boxing Council minimumweight title after he scored a spectacular fourth-round technical knockout win over Lorenzo Trejo at the Plaza de Toros, a bullring in Cancun, Mexico.

The fight was one of the featured bouts during the WBC Night of Champions, a gathering of more than 100 past and present WBC world champions in Mexico.

A left hook to the jaw by Mayol sent Trejo, who is managed by three-time world champion Erik Morales, to the canvas in the first round.

After dominating the second and third rounds, Mayol rained blows on Trejo in the fourth round, capped by a left uppercut that sent Trejo down for good at the 2:29 mark.

"It was just amazing," said an ecstatic Games and Amusements Board chair Eric Buhain, who watched Mayol's fight at ringside. "The Mexicans really applaud us now, especially after Manny Pacquiao's win and this one."

With the win, Mayol, the OPBF champ who improved to 22-0 with 17 KOs, gained a ticket to challenge WBC champ Eagle Kyowa within the year. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Rodrigo, Lim top MPC golf

DEMPSEY hits the ceremonial drive.

RONNIE RODRIGO AND VINCENT LIM WERE the big winners in the recent first MPC Invitational golf tournament at the Sta. Elena layout.

Rodrigo emerged overall champion, while Lim won low gross honors in the event that lured more than 50 players.

Antonio Olbes won the Enrique Zobel title over Tootsie de Jesus; Carmela Lee upended Lily Chan for the William McKinley Cup; while Newton Mapua took the Cameron Forbes crown over Alejandro Sy.

The event was held in cooperation with Sta. Elena Properties, Inc., the Philippine Daily Inquirer, HSBC, Smart Gold, Callaway Golf, Dusit Hotel Nikko and Seattle's Best.

Manila Polo Club president Rey Dempsey hit the ceremonial drive opening the tournament.

You don't like Manny Pacquiao?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—THERE WAS THIS fellow, a former close-in driver of Manny Pacquiao around here, who told me how close the boxing hero had moved to death when he fought Mexico's Erik Morales.

Greg Asuncion, who works in the staff of the Sheriff's Office here, swore he had seen the bloody dangers Pacquiao had encountered in his battle against Morales at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas last March.

Pudgy and chinky-eyed, Asuncion was among the so-called LA Boys, a loose group that formed Pacquiao's informal staff-driver, cook, errand boy, cordon sanitaire, etc. whenever their hero would be in town.

Our informant has since been shipped out of Team Pacquiao. They said the cut in ties came as a result of money matters.

Asuncion had other things to say about the separation.

But we talk about that some other time.

* * *

Before anything else, this is my sign-off column from this city of great contrasts, where the clear path to glory and ring immortality started for Pacquiao.

It's indeed a most rewarding experience to be here, later in Las Vegas, to chronicle Pacquiao's golden exploits, a major chapter not only in sports but in our national history as well.

It may be exaggerated, but Jan. 21, 2006, when Pacquiao conquered Morales to avenge a previous loss, could be equal in importance, if not in significance, to Aug. 21, 1983, when Ninoy Aquino was slain upon his return to his beloved country.

While Aquino's martyrdom stirred the whole nation to clamor and unite for the ouster of a hated dictatorship, Pacquiao lifted the sagging spirits of his countrymen with that sensational revenge victory of his in Las Vegas.

* * *

Anyway, this stint had proved quite trying for your reporter here, not because of the task of chronicling Pacquiao's path to glory.

It just so happened that, at times, transmitting our stories had bordered on the impossible. Like that point when we got stranded for five hours on our way to Las Vegas after a vehicle in our convoy suffered electrical trouble.

We arrived in Vegas past midnight and, with no available system to transmit our report to Manila—the business center was closed, the Floppy system in my outdated machine would not work—I had to bother Nick Giongco of Manila Bulletin, a very able reporter, in his sleep to beg for the use of his computer.

Before that, there was one night when I had to use my cellphone to text over 30 paragraphs to Manila after the e-mail system in our office bogged down.

No, this is not a lament. But I do apologize for being a nuisance. I would also like to thank my friend Nick Giongco for that gracious act of accommodating a countryman in distress.

* * *

Now, let me share with you what Greg Asuncion claimed he saw in the dugout where he and Pacquiao had rushed after the first fight against Morales last March.

"*Noon ko lang nalaman, pwede kang mamatay sa* boxing (It was only then I realized you could get killed inside the boxing ring)," Asuncion told me when he strayed into my room at the Vagabond Inn around Hollywood before Team Pacquiao drove to Las Vegas on Jan. 16.

I didn't have to ask Asuncion. He readily proceeded with his tale and claimed how terrified he was when he saw Pacquiao had blood in his urine. This came, he said, after Pacquiao had absorbed savage body blows from Morales.

"*Maitim nga yung dugo sa ihi niya* (There was dark blood in his urine)," he said.

Of course, I myself had been witness to boxers suffering this painful, bloody fate after losing fights.

But it was not only the dark blood in the urine that led Asuncion to swear that Pacquiao had been badly beaten in his first match with Morales.

"*Si Manny mismo nagsabi talagang nahirapan at nasaktan siya. Malakas, magaling at magulang daw ang kalaban* (Manny himself confided he felt terrible. Morales was great, big and foxy)," Asuncion explained.

* * *

Based on reports, there may never be a reunification between Pacquiao and Asuncion, his closest aide in the first fight against Morales.

But, to those who may have been wondering about the true impact of Pacquiao on the lives of Filipinos, listen to what Asuncion had to say.

"*Alam mo naman dito sa* LA, second class citizen *tayo. Pero 'pag nalamang kababayan tayo ni Pacquiao, gumaganda ang tingin sa atin* (We're second-class citizens here in LA, but others see us in a different light because of Pacquiao)," he said.

Pacquiao, needless to say, is a mighty, gifted boxer.

But he would have been stuck in the bakery, where he first worked, or in any construction site, if not for his warrior's heart.

Hemingway is right. War is the province of danger and therefore courage, above all things, is the first quality of a warrior.

Don't ask anymore why Manny Pacquiao is extra special.

DALLAS guard Josh Howard hangs on to the rim after dunking against Utah's Jarron Collins (31) and Deron Williams. AP

Howard fans Dallas' streak; Duncan sparks solid Spurs

DALLAS—JOSH HOWARD SCORED 24 points to spark a streaking Dallas Mavericks to an eighth straight victory, downing the Utah Jazz, 103-89, at the American Airlines Center on Saturday.

Dirk Nowitzki added 21 points for the Mavericks despite suffering an ankle injury that forced him to leave the game late in the first quarter.

The German power forward appeared to be in pain after tripping over a Utah player and twisting his ankle, but he returned midway through the second quarter.

He took just eight shots in the game, making six of them and all eight of his free throws, the majority after returning to the game.

Dallas (34-10) kept pace with the San Antonio Spurs atop the Midwest Division with the win, staying tied with the defending NBA champions for the best record in the Western Conference and second best overall in the NBA behind the Detroit Pistons.

The Mavericks have won 11 of their past 12 games and returned home after a perfect 5-0 road trip to make easy work of the Jazz for their latest win.

Utah has lost two straight and four out of five to fall two games under the .500 mark for the first time since New Year's Eve.

The NHL's Dallas Stars played earlier in the day in the same arena, beating the Detroit Red Wings, 2-1, in a shootout, making it the first time both teams played in the facility back-to-back.

Dallas led, 51-42, at the half and shot 55 percent to thwart any potential Utah runs throughout the game. Jason Terry added 18 points for the Mavs and Keith Van Horn contributed 15.

Meanwhile, the Spurs maintained their good form by downing the Minnesota Timberwolves, 102-88, in San Antonio for a third straight win.

Tim Duncan had 28 points and hauled down 16 rebounds for the Spurs, while Tony Parker scored 25 points.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas scored 32 points as the Wizards routed the injury-riddled Charlotte Bobcats, 107-97.

In Philadelphia, Qyntel Woods scored 24 points as the 76ers beat the New York Knicks, 91-76, despite playing without Allen Iverson. *Reuters*

Federer ducks upset, claims Aussie crown

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—Top-ranked Roger Federer claimed his seventh Grand Slam title Sunday, overcoming an early challenge from unseeded Marcos Baghdatis to win the Australian Open, 5-7, 7-5, 6-0, 6-2.

Stepping up his game as the match wore on, Federer's experience under pressure showed, running off 11 straight games to take control from 5-5 in the second set.

The 24-year-old Federer won Wimbledon and the US Open last year and will be seeking a non-calendar year Grand Slam in May on the clay at Roland Garros, where his best performance was reaching the semifinals in 2005.

After becoming the first man since Pete Sampras (Wimbledon and US Open in 1993 and Australian Open in '94) to win three consecutive majors, Federer broke down in tears.

He repeatedly had to take time to gather himself after he got the champions trophy from Rod Laver, the last man to sweep all four Grand Slam events in the same year, in 1969.

"I guess it's all coming out now," Federer said. "I've had some hard speeches, but this one is a little rough right now."

He thanked Laver, his voice breaking one last time, then embraced the 67-year-old Australian.

Even Baghdatis' rowdy fans, who grew in number as he knocked off second-seeded Andy Roddick, No. 4 David Nalbandian and two other seeded players in the tournament, couldn't help the Cypriot rally this time.

He still was flying high despite the loss.

"Its a dream come true," Baghdatis said after having to playfully shush his cheering fans. "It's just amazing. I love everybody watching in Cyprus. Kisses."

FEDERER: Survives early scare AFP

Hingis triumphs

Meanwhile, Martina Hingis has a Grand Slam title just a month into her comeback from a three-year retirement due to injuries.

Hingis, who lost in the singles quarterfinals to Kim Clijsters, combined with Mahesh Bhupathi to win the mixed doubles championship, beating Daniel Nestor and Elena Likhovtseva, 6-3, 6-3.

"If anyone asks me why I came back, this is why, the dream of being back on court, of winning major titles," Hingis said at the trophy presentations. AP

Unbelievable aversion

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE that even though boxing made them rich and famous, Manny Pacquiao, the people's champion; Ms Laura Elorde, wife of the late Gabriel "Flash" Elorde; and Fil-Am sensation Brian Viloria, the newly crowned World Boxing Council junior flyweight titleholder, would be so vocal to show aversion to the sport.

Said Pacquiao (of his 10th round demolition of Mexican idol Erik Morales): "*Parang madaling tingnan, pero napaka-hirap talaga* (It looks so easy, but it is not; it's really very tough)." He added he would not encourage his sons (5-year-old Emmanuel Jr. and 4-year-old Michael Stephen) to pursue a career in boxing, noting the dangers inherent in it.

For her part, the 77-year-old, Tokyo University-educated Laura Elorde said, "Ever since Bay (Gabriel) died on Jan. 2, 1985 when he was only 49, I have stopped watching boxing bouts. *Kasi hanggang ngayon kapag nakikita kong tinatamaan ang boksingero parang si* Bay *ang tinatamaan*. I can feel the pain every time a boxer gets hit." Laura, by the way, correctly predicted a Pacquiao victory over Morales in their rematch.

"I know death surrounds us every time we climb the ring," said Viloria, who will be making his first defense of the WBC crown on Feb. 18 at the Alladinn Hotel in Las Vegas against former champion Jose Antonio Aguirre.

A college student in Hawaii, Viloria lamented the spate of ring fatalities and injuries, including the recent death of International Boxing Federation lightweight champ Leavander Johnson, who died from a severe brain injury he suffered in a fight with Jesus Chavez at the MGM Grand Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas. Viloria also noted that Indonesian boxer Antonius Rahaman lapsed into a coma after he underwent brain surgery following a 6th round TKO loss to Filipino Ayon Naranjo, who in turn, also suffered brain injuries after taking a beating from Venezuelan Jorge Linares in a subsequent fight.

Viloria added every second counts in a boxing bout and it is up to the boxer to do what is good for him. "A boxer can stop the fight on his own. There is no need for the referee to stop the fight or for his corner to throw in the towel when he knew he was already hurting."

Around the world more than 500 boxers have died in the ring or suffered injuries since the Marquis of Queensberry Rules were introduced in 1884. In the Philippines, some 20 boxers have died while many more have suffered brain injuries, including those who are disabled, destitute and blind. Too many people have been paying lip service to save the ailing pro boxing industry, but hardly anybody has been making a substantial progress.

Boxing, without question, is a poor man's sport. It is a sport that pulls many poor kids out of the pits. Still, one can count with his fingers the lucky few who made good and struck gold, among them Hall of Famer Flash Elorde, the late Tirso del Rosario, the pride of Tondo; and now Manny Pacquiao, who has earned enough money to fill his pockets for several lifetimes.

Speaking of Pacquiao, there is no other Filipino boxer at present who can fill the fight venue to capacity like him. Gone were the good old days of Pancho Villa, Ceferino Garcia, Dado Marino, Tirso del Rosario, Speed Cabanela, Bonnie Espinosa, Little Cesar, Dommy Ursua, Flash Elorde, Rene Barrientos, Ben Villaflor, Young Terror, Baby Lorona, Danny Kid, Roberto Cruz, Pedro Adigue, Bernabe Villacampo, Erbito Salavarria, Frank Cedeño, Luisito Espinosa, Dodie Boy and Gerry Peñalosa and Rolando Navarrete.

"There's only one Manny Pacquiao," said Amateur Boxing Association of the Philipines president Manny Lopez.

* * *

IN BEHALF OF BERT, THANK YOU. Ever since we first came out with a plea for help for colleague Bert Cuevas, Manila Standard Today sports editor, many friends and acquaintances have been offering concern for an ailing buddy. Gus Villanueva of the Journal Group said several kind-hearted people have already called him to extend support. "We have to help him," he said.

TV analyst Ed Picson and jazz artist Richard Merk are slated to hold a fund-raising concert for Bert Cuevas, a diabetic; and another ailing colleague, Butch Maniego, who needs a kidney transplant.

BUICK GOLF

Top guns take their act to final round

LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA—FRAMED BY SPECtacular views of the Pacific Ocean that come complete with hang gliders setting sail from majestic cliffs, Torrey Pines is a classic golf course.

Set in motion by Phil Mickelson's outward 32, the day's action was carried forward by Tiger Woods's inward 32 as both behemoths got into contention. It was capped by a pair of birdie putts at the par-5 18th that earned Sergio Garcia and Rod Pampling a share of the lead at 11-under-par 205.

Garcia and Pampling each fired a 4-under 68 and they'll be joined in today's final group by Woods, who shot 67 to sit one back, tied with PGA Tour rookie Nathan Green (69), while Mickelson (69-207) birdied the 18th to get within two, joint fifth with Brandt Jobe (75) and Jesper Parnevik (73).

"I had a chance to go really low," said Mickelson in reference to his four-birdie, 5-par outward nine. "However, I'm still in striking distance, as are a lot of guys."

The lefthander—who, like Woods, is a three-time winner of this event—speaks the truth, for eight players are within three of the lead and 14 are within five. Of course, the fact those ranked No. 1 (Woods), 4 (Mickelson), and 6 (Garcia) in the world order are most prominent is the sort of stuff tournament organizers dream about as each marquee name had a turn atop the leaderboard.

First, Mickelson. He started the day six behind, but with his fifth birdie of the day, at the 221-yard, par-3 11th, the lefthander was 11 under and in front by one because Jobe, the second-round leader, lost three shots going out and fell to 9 under. Surely, it was stuff that pleased Mickelson's hometown fans, only he bogeyed three of the next six holes to fall behind a charge that looked so familiar. No surprise that it was authored by Woods, who started the round seven shots back and tied for 22d.

"I put myself into position," said Woods, who started slowly. When he followed a birdie at the par-5 sixth with a bogey at the par-4 seventh, he was 5 under, still seven back, but Woods reminded himself that this was Torrey Pines, where he has three victories and five other top-10 finishes.

While Mickelson was struggling down the stretch, it was a different story for Garcia and Pampling, both of whom had begun the day five behind Jobe. Garcia, the 26-year-old Spaniard fell further behind when he made a double bogey at the par-4 second, but he went bogey-free from there on and fought to 10 under when he knocked a 5 iron to 16 feet at the 502-yard, par-4 12th and sank that. *New York Times News Service*

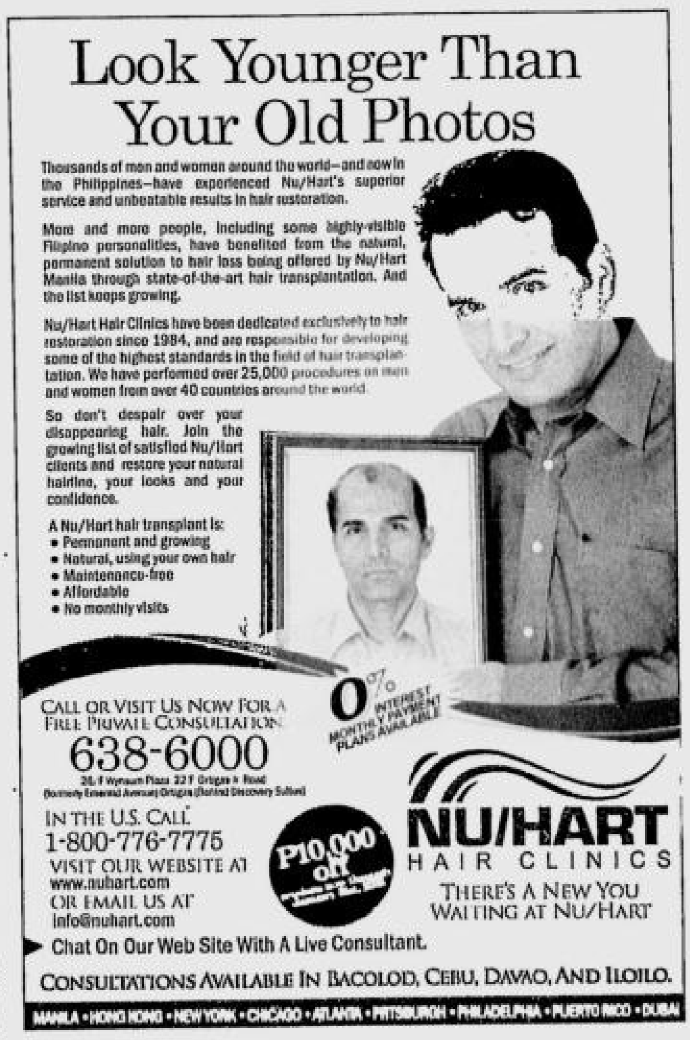
SERGIO Garcia will have a lot of hard work to do, with Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson lurking behind. AFP

Sun, Team-fun, and Live Band Music Dazzle Riders at Cebu Jamboree

SN REMIGIO, Cebu Island – Around 500 riders came from all over Central Visayas. Almost every city and municipality in Cebu Island was represented by at least one Honda rider joining the Honda Motorcycle Jamboree in Cebu. For most of the riders this was their first Motorcycle Jamboree experience in their lifetime. The riders profile represented a demographic snapshot of Philippine society today--students, teachers, employees, professionals, and the diversity in the riders' age profile was as wide as the expanse between the deep blue sea and the wide open sky. One group from Escalante, Negros Occidental crossed the sea (Tañon Strait) by ferry boat just so not to miss out on their most awaited event this season—The Honda Motorcycle Jamboree in Cebu. The chosen venue for the January 21 and 22 Visayas leg of Honda's 1st Jamboree Series was Casa Del Mar Golf and Dive Resort located in Barangay Mano, San Remigio, Cebu Island.

The Luzon and Mindanao legs of Honda's 1st Jamboree Series were held earlier in Caliraya Springs, Cavinti, Laguna in May 2005 and in Eden Nature Park in Davao in December 2005, respectively.

The Cebu run (Jamboree) completes Honda's 1st Jamboree Series.



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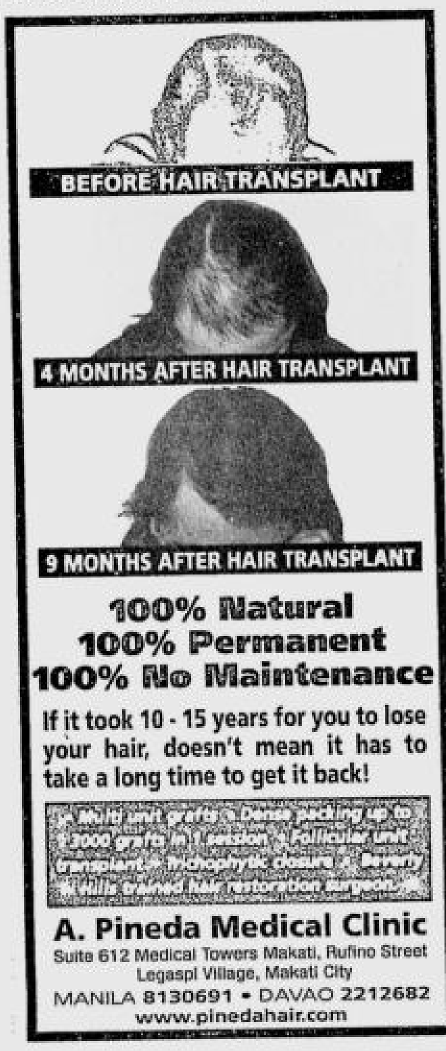
SPORTS

Team RP brings victory act to EK

MEMBERS OF THE VICTORIOUS TEAM PHILIPpines continue their celebration with a day of fun, fast action and thrills at the Enchanted Kingdom in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, on Wednesday. Globe Telecom and Pepsi Cola join the country's only world-class theme park in hosting a victory bash for the athletes, who won for the Philippines its first overall championship in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games. The athletes are expected to arrive at the facility at 3 p.m. "Enchanted Kingdom is very happy to welcome and host this event for Team Philippines," said EK president Mario O. Mamon. "Their glory is the country's pride and we hope they enjoy the Enchanted Kingdom experience."



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FORMER Milo Marathon ladies queen Estela Mamac-Diaz heads back to Kidapawan with a safe 1-km lead over Nichiren Parenio and Mitchzelle Tatad. "Hindi pa sana ako lalaro ngayon, pero kailangan ko ng pera dahil ipapagamot ko si nanay," said Diaz, 33.

MILO MARATHON KICKOFF

Diaz wins for ailing mom; Boncit scores

KIDAPAWAN CITY—ESTELA MAMAC-DIAZ REturned to the winner's circle along with Jonel Boncit yesterday as they ruled the kickoff leg of the 30th National Milo Marathon that wound up in front of the Kidapawan City Hall here yesterday.

Diaz, who finished second in the national finals last year, came to yesterday's 21 qualifying race determined to capture the leg title and the P10,000 cash purse and won convincingly.

"I had to run because I needed the money for my sick mother," said the 33-year-old runner from Davao City in Filipino after completing the course in one hour, 41 minutes and 14 second.

Diaz, the 2004 leg champion who was dethroned in the finals last year by fellow Davaoeña Jho-an Banayag, now has 10 months to train for the finals.

Also advancing to the 2006 national finals in Metro Manila on Dec. 10 are second placer Nichiren Parenio (2:03:08) and third placer Mitchzelle Tatad (2:30:00).

Boncit, who was disqualified from the 21K race last year because he was underaged, scored as an 18-year-old in the Kidapawan City run.

But while the competition was not as tough as in the Davao leg, he said the course was twice as hard because of the uphill climb to the finish.

A varsity runner from University of Mindanao in Tagum, Davao, Boncit finished the race in 1:19:37.

Joining him in the 42K finals in December are second placer Raul Lamprea (1:20:22) of Holy Cross of Davao College and Elmer Bartolo (1:22:19) of University of Mindanao.

Local favorite Isidro Vildosola, the amputee who topped last year's opening leg and won two gold medals in the Asean ParaGames last month, settled for fifth place behind Gilbert Maluyo of Kidapawan City.

"It was tough because the runners from Davao competed here," Vildosola said. "I'll try to do better next year."

While the organizers had declared the qualifying races open to all, a runner can only win once in this 30-leg season.

Kidapawan City Mayor Rodolfo Gantuangco fired the starting gun that sent off 4,462 runners. He also later helped Philippine Sports Commissioner Leon Montemayor hand the trophies and medals to the winners.

The marathon finals will be held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Cebu Pacific, Adidas and Powerbar.

Topping the 5K fun run were Marlon Moralde and Jeralyn Matunhay while the 3K age-group winners were Jumar Atiagan and June Nika Cagas in the 6-9 category and Jonard Silba and Mayjoy Labawan in the 10-12 division.

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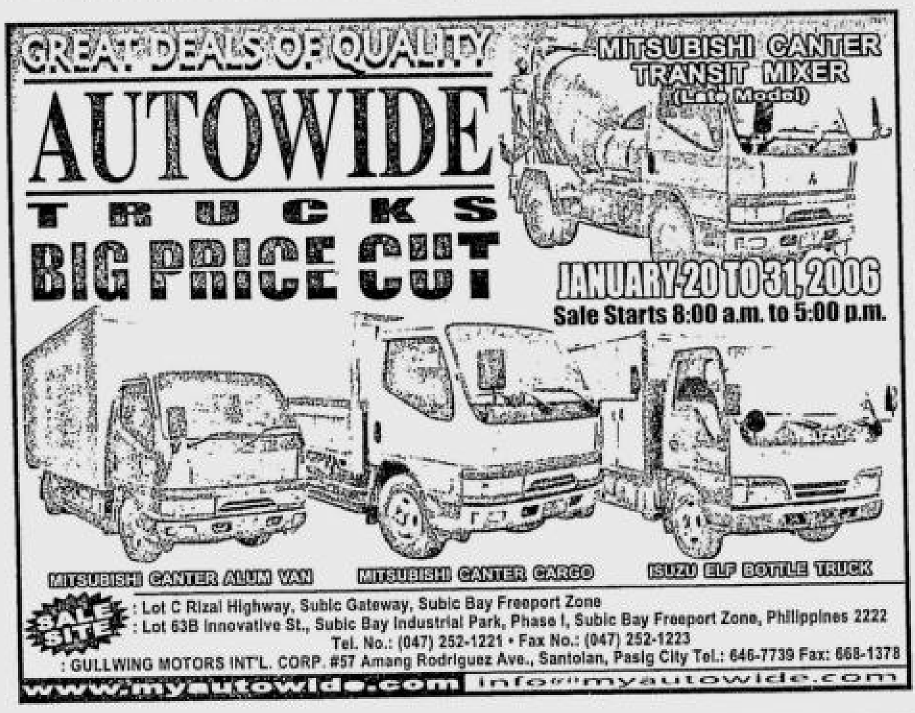

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SPORTSWATCH

PBL rivals Forum guests

THE PROTAGONISTS in this week's PBL Heroes Cup Finals are the main guests in tomorrow's PSA Forum at the main function room of the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. Coach Caloy Garcia of Rain or Shine and his Magnolia counterpart, Koy Banal, will discuss what to expect from their respective teams in the best-of-five title series that begins Thursday at the San Andres gym in Manila. Players and organizers of the Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball tournament, led by former sports commissioner Tisha Abundo, are also appearing in the public sports program aired over Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Pagcor and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

MCC chess tourneys set

THE MCC 1900-below Individual Active chess tournament and the Inter-School Elementary and High School team championships reel off on Feb. 5 and Feb. 18-19, respectively, at St. Francis Square, at the back of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City. The 1900-below tourney is open to unrated and rated players whose active ratings are not over 1900. The one-day event will employ the six-round Swiss system with a time control of 25 minutes per player. Registration fee is P250. The team competition, open to all private and public schools, is divided into the elementary and high school categories. Each team is made up of three regular members and one alternate. The average rating of the team must not exceed 1850. The two-day tourney will employ the five-round Swiss system with a time control of 60 minutes per player. Entry fee is P600 per team. Both events offer a cash pot of P10,000. For inquiries, call 826-8560, 0916-8521069 or 0922-5397392.

52 fights up in Makati derby

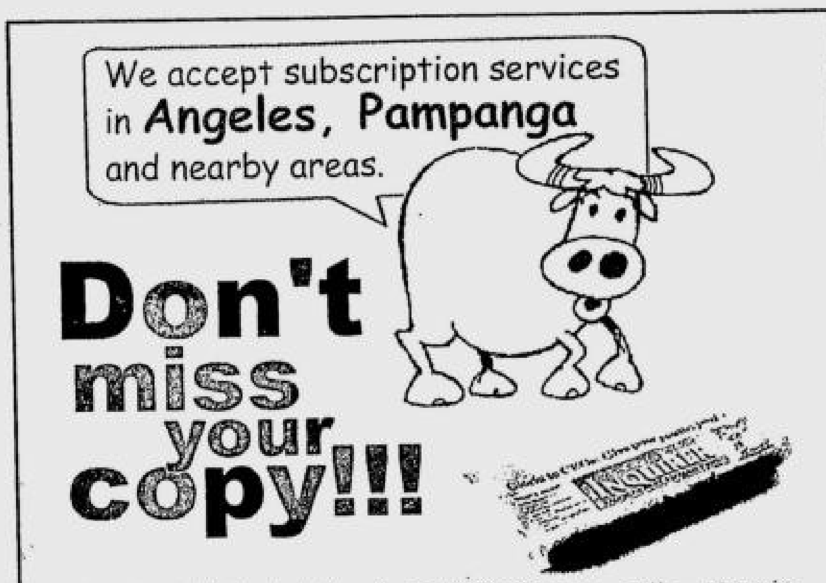
FIFTY-TWO exciting fights are on tap in a 3-cock derby today at the Makati Coliseum with B-Meg Derby Ace as sponsor. Cockfight aficionados can get their tickets at a discounted price of P300, said promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. Another 3-cock derby unfolds on Wednesday with Capt. Leo Magpantay as host. Entry fee is P4,400. Entries must be submitted tomorrow from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. The next PCAP derby sizzles on Feb. 6. For other details, call 896-3545 at 895-6475. Meanwhile, reservation of cockhouses for the Summer Salpukan 6-Cock Derby slated April 27, 29, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13 is now ongoing. Aside from the P3 million cash pot, a Toyota Altis and a Toyota Vios will go to the fastest win champion. The champion handler will take home P150,000 cash and two motorcycles.

Pacquiao 8-cocker backed

THE UPCOMING Pacquiao Big Event 8-cock Derby, originally scheduled as a one-day affair at the San Juan Coliseum, will instead be held on Feb. 6 and 8 to accommodate more entries. A participant must hurdle the 4-cock elimination round on Feb. 6 to qualify for the 4-cock championship on Feb. 8. Manny Pacquiao is co-sponsor of the derby, which will be presented by Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP), SJC management and Sagupaan Complexor 3000. A welcome party is being readied for Pacquiao by GCAP members and SJC management on Feb. 3 at Shangri-la Hotel EDSA. For inquiries, call 0917-8041691 and look for Ariel.

Candelaria tilt under way

THE 39TH edition of the prestigious Candelaria 7-Cock Derby kicked off at the Iloilo Coliseum yesterday. Thunderbird Power Feeds backs the derby dangles P7 million in cash prizes for an entry fee of P48,000 and a minimum bet of P22,000. Hosted by Chito Tinsay, assisted by The Iloilo Sportsmen, Inc., the derby also lured foreign pitmasters from the United States, among them Tommy Green of Virginia, Jerry Adkins and Jason Campbell of Arkansas, Chris Nesmith, Ray Boles, Bobby Fairchild and Jimbo Cox. The first batch of participants clashed in the 2-cock qualifying round supported by Thunderbird Bexan-XP yesterday. The remaining entries collide today and tomorrow in the fights backed by Thunderbird Baby Stag Booster. The Thunderbird Platinum 3-cock finals kick off on Thursday.



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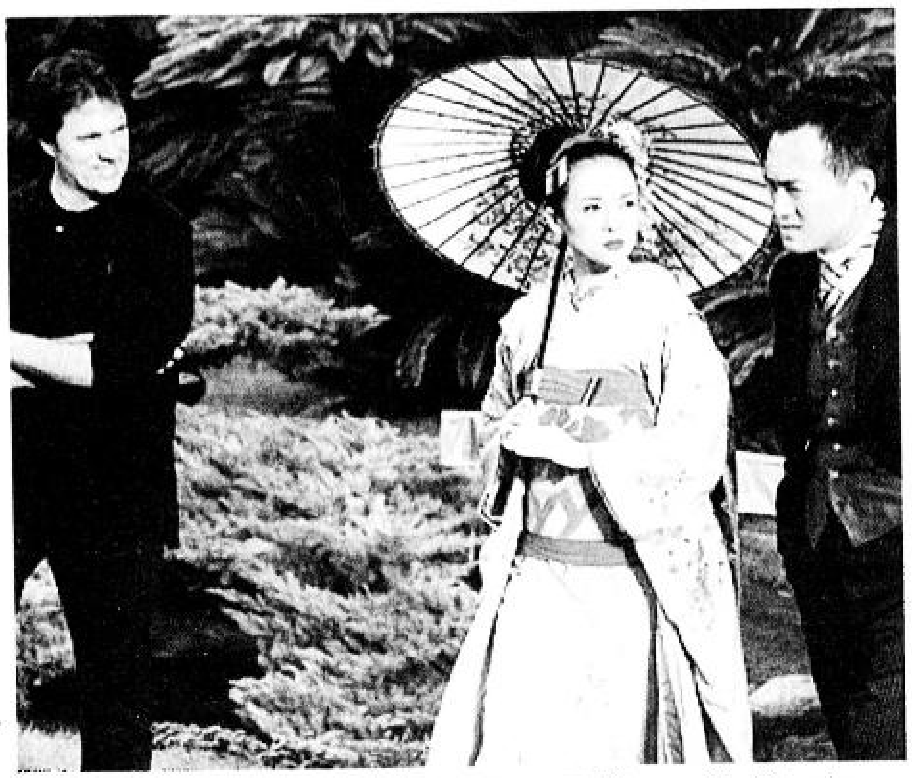

ROB Marshall, left, on the extraordinary set, with his star Ziyi Zhang and Ken Watanabe.

13 old and new Pinoy films showing in Rotterdam fest

CHEER FACTOR

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THIRTEEN OLD AND NEW FILIPINO films are being screened at the 35th Rotterdam International Film Festival (RIFF), ongoing in the Netherlands until Feb. 5.

Included in the festival's Cinema Regained program, these Pinoy films are among the works assessed in the anthology "Critic After Dark: A Review of Philippine Cinema," written by Filipino critic Noel Vera.

The full-length Pinoy features in RIFF are Lino Brocka's "Insiang," Mike de Leon's "Kisapmata," Mario O'Hara's "Pangarap ng Puso," Tikoy Aguiluz's "Boatman" and "Bagong Bayani OCW," Chito Roño's "Eskapo" and Lav Diaz's "Hesus Rebolusyonaryo."

Also in the lineup are six short films by Raymond Red—"Ang Magpakailanman," "Meckam," "Melancholy," "Pelikula," "A Study for the Skies" and "Anino," which won the Cannes Palme d'Or for Short Film in 2000.

April date

Meanwhile, digital filmmaker Dennis Marasigan has accepted the invitation of festival director Philip Cheah for his debut "Sa North Diversion Road" to be shown at the 19th Singapore International Film Festival (SIFF), scheduled from April 13 to 29.

A product of last year's Cinema One digital film festival, Marasigan's "Sa North" will be joining four works from the first Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival—"Room Boy," "Babae," "Blood Bank" and "Mansyon"—in SIFF's The Free Program.

Last year, films by Lav Diaz, Mes de Guzman, John Torres and Khavn de la Cruz were showcased in SIFF.

Turning Japanese

Director Rob Marshall on how he survived the set of 'Memoirs of a Geisha,' where three languages were spoken

By Alexis L. Loinaz
Contributor

TAKE FIVE

NEW YORK CITY—SAY "Sayonara!" to uninspired Hollywood casting: It looks like Tinseltown is turning Japanese.

"Memoirs of a Geisha," which hits Manila theaters anytime soon, features an explosive cast of top Asian actors in lead roles—a watershed moment in Asian actors' continuing invasion of Hollywood.

The movie tells the Cinderella-like tale of a young girl in pre-war Japan who is sold to a geisha house by her parents. Geishas were the country's elite class of unattainable women, having mastered the fineries of sophisticated living: music, dance, conversation, seduction. We see first-hand the beauty and savagery of this girl's struggle, as she ascends the ranks of Japan's most celebrated geishas, all in the pursuit of an elusive love.

Ziyi Zhang ("Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon") is the heroine; Michelle Yeoh ("Tomorrow Never Dies") is her mentor;

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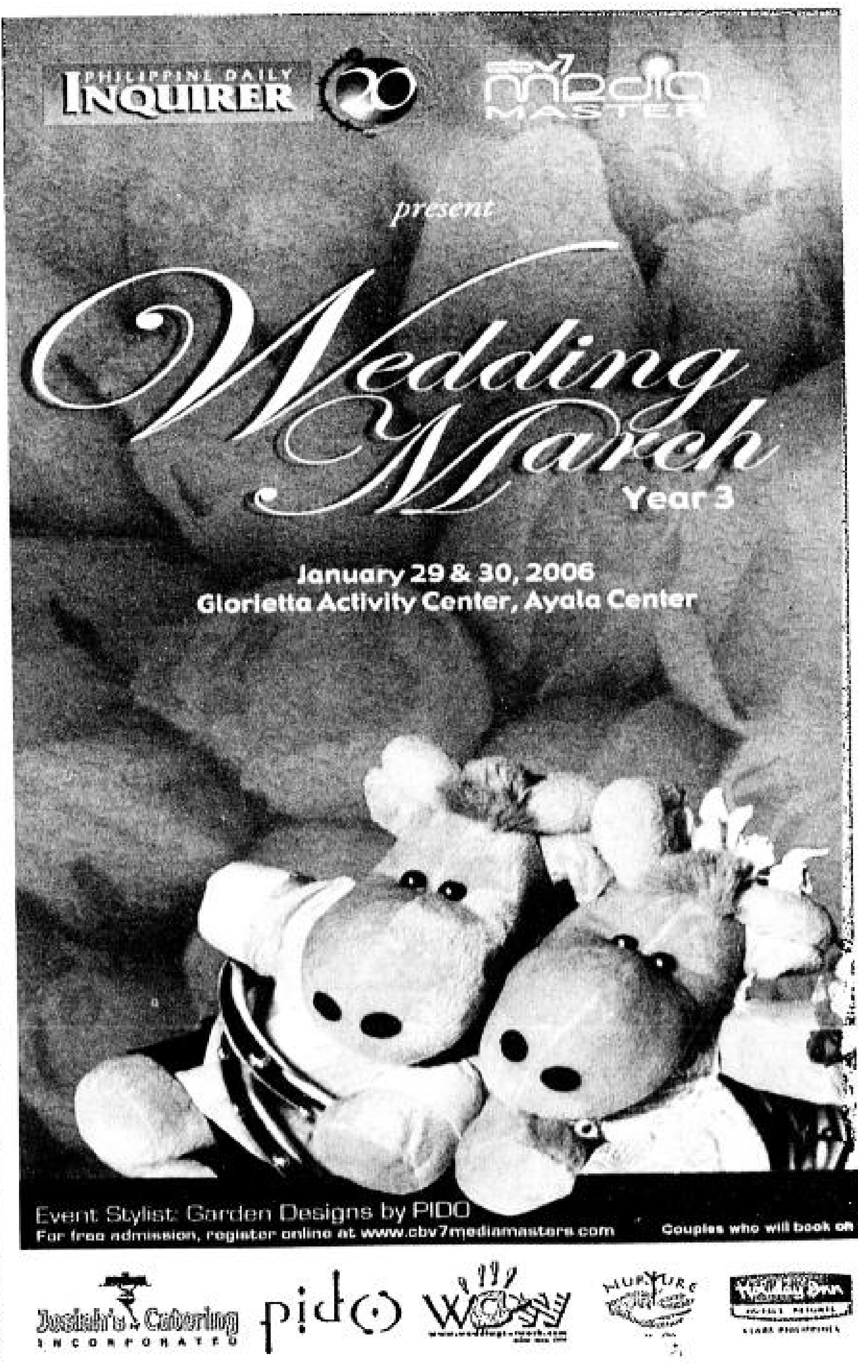

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- Elizabeth Sandi Couture
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HALF LIGHT PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GP 1:25,3:40	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GP 1:40,3:50,6:00, 8:10,10:15
RUMOR HAS IT PG13 12:50,3:05,5:20, 7:35,9:50	ZATHURA GP 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:20	FUN WITH DICK AND JANE PG13 1:00,3:10,5:20, 7:30,9:40

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'Little Big Star' Cebu

THE YOUNG contenders prove there is much talent to be discovered still around the country.

By Nini Valera

ROBERT VILLAR JR. took a deep breath before he burst into song—a heartfelt rendition of "Luha," Aegis' paean to love.

Eyes closed, Robert soared with the high notes. It didn't matter that he wore shiny pants that were at least four sizes too big and a long-sleeved shirt that hang on his body like a sack.

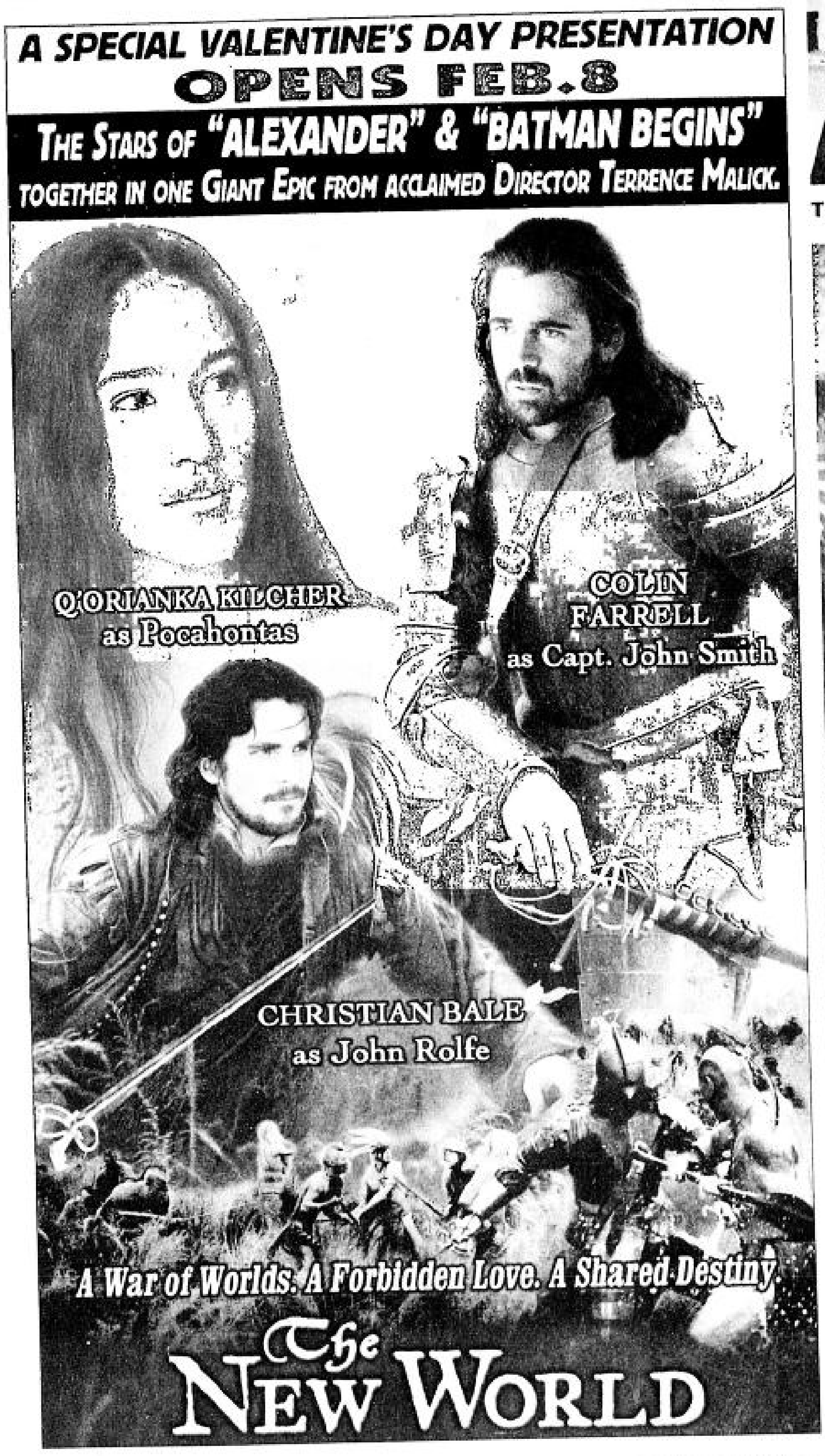
Robert was determined to be a star—a little big star.

He was one of more than 400 children aged 5 to 12 from all over the Visayas who auditioned for the reality singing contest, "Little Big Star," which kicks off in Cebu City today on ABS-CBN.

"I used to sing like Robert," Naomi, Robert's mother, told INQUIRER Entertainment in halting Filipino. "I used to carry him in my arms and sing. That's probably why he loves to sing, too."

As a kid, like her son, Naomi had big dreams which poverty shattered into tiny pieces. She and her husband, Robert Sr., used to be scav-

LITTLE/ A2-3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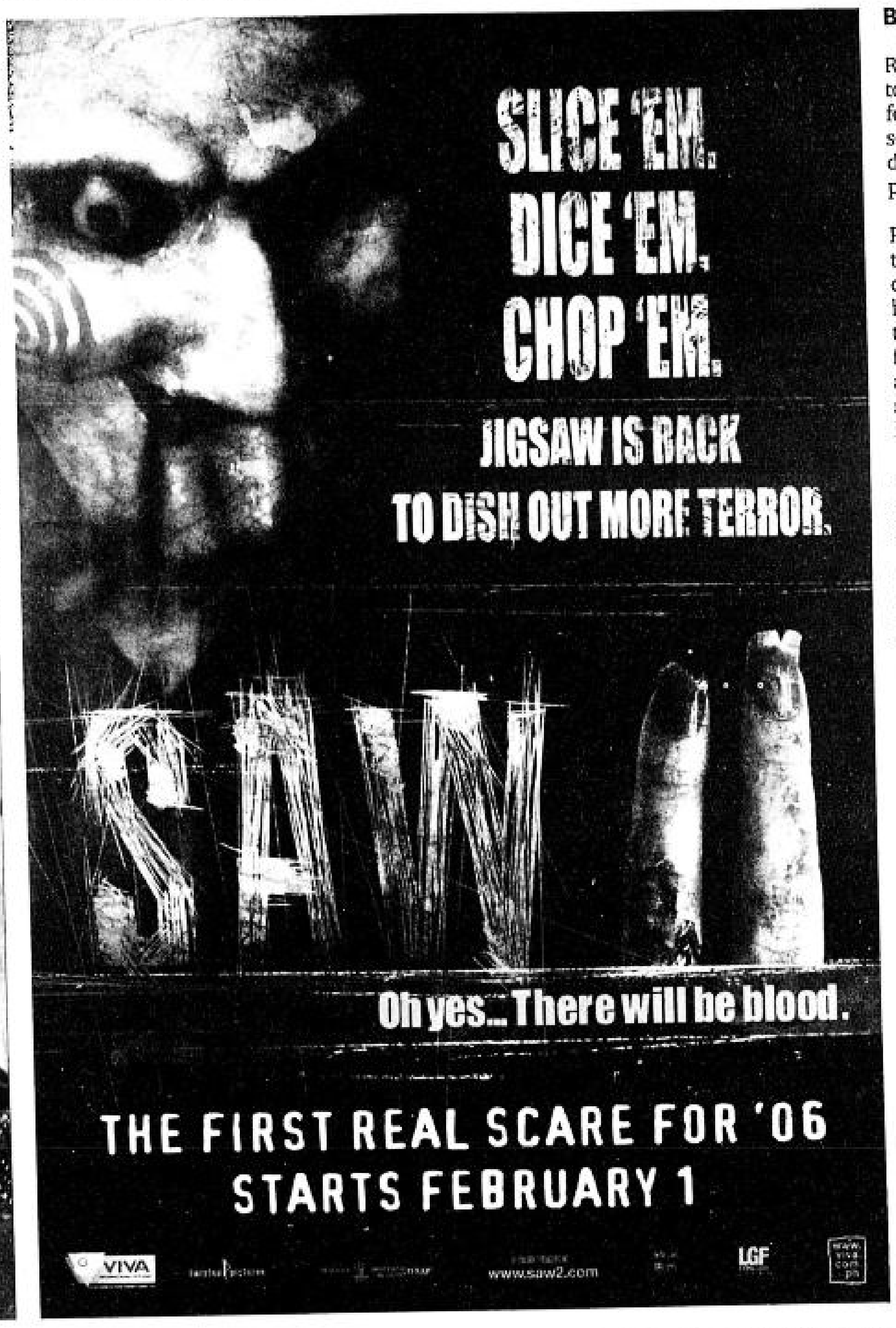
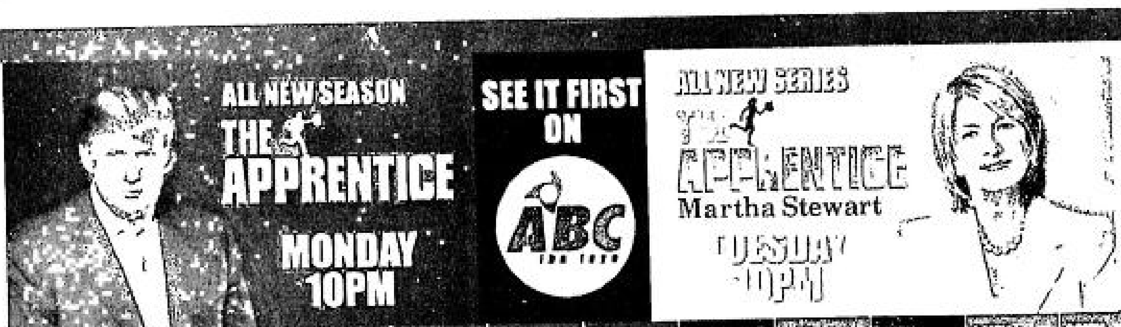


INQUIRER TV GUIDE
Monday, January 30, 2006



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Channel	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	[illegible]	8:30PM	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	11:30PM
ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		Speed		TNA Impact		Sentro	Friends	Guinness Book Of Record		Fear Factor		Big News	The Apprentice		Totoo TV	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Gulong Ng Palad	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Forbidden Love	OK Fine Whatever			Insider
AXN		Las Vegas		Las Vegas		Las Vegas		Jumanji				Blue Streak				CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Energy Bomb	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinema One		Estela Mondragon				Antipolo Massacre				Sanib				Minsan Minahal Kita				Hanggat May Hininga	
Cinemax			Hercules And The Circle Of Fire			Dead Canaries			Flashdance			Just Cause			Sniper 3 (8:45PM)			National Security (11:15PM)	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Discovery Channel				Monster Garage		Engineering Against Disaster		I Survived		Wild Discovery		Colour Of War		Conquerors		I Survived		The New Detectives	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/[illegible] Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Black Hole High	So Little Time	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pool: Snooker World Pool League '05 Poland		2005 Kaohsiung World Pool Champ				Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				Sportscenter Asia	Major League Baseball Sat Chicago Navy Yard Special						Sportscenter Asia
ETC		ETC Special		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Love Shack		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		ET Weekend		ETC Special	
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion Encore	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Bible Treasure Chest	Imago Of God	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Sunday Night With [illegible] Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Threshold Of Hope		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Defending Life	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends				Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace/Lagot Ka Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Doc Martin		Gleason (3:50 PM)			Who's The Boss? II	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Wedding Daze			McLeod's Daughters IV		Strong Medicine
HBO		Iron Eagle (3:15 PM)				Congo (6:15 PM)				Dragonheart (7:15 PM)				The Stepford Wives			Outback		
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		Basketball Show		The Score	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		Samurai Jack	Beat The Geeks	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Moto Made	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! Extra Ultimate Hwood Blonde		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Living Space	Style Star	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	Rockola	MTV Ask	Chart Attack		Viva La Bam	Pop Inc		MTV Hits			Aeon Flux	Massive	Girl Spotted	TRL		The 70's House	Wild N' Out	Homecoming	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten			Mobile MYX Top Picks	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Amazing Moments		Wild Sex		Snake Wranglers	Totally Wild	Top 5		Wow!		About Ada		Nat Geographic Specials		Triumph Of Life		Wild Sex	
NBN		Value Vision		Value Vision		Teledyaryo	[illegible]	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K.	
Nickelodeon	Blue's Clues	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Chinese New Yr Animal Stunt		All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBQ			Noel Juico 16				[illegible]				Nobar 2 Gedor				Paano Ba Ang Mangarap?				Gusto Ko Nang Lumigaya
Qtv		Bodyguard	Striker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Angono Sa	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh Ang Kulit	H3O Hahaha Over		News On Q	[illegible]		MINT (Music Interactive)	
RPN9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold	Wild Thornberrys	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Scare Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Simple Life 2	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng [illegible]		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		2005 IBF Dutch Mixed Doubles		Copenhagen Masters		Swatch FIVB World Tour '05 Acapulco Women's Finals				Sagupaan		Sportsdesk	NBA Jam	NBA Game Heat @ Rockets			Sportsdesk		NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus		Pac 10 TBD				Ultimate Fighting Championship				Arena Football						Buick Invitational Final Rd.			
Star Movies		True Lies (3:10 PM)					The Ladykillers			Agent Cody Banks (7:15 PM)		I, Robot				The Village (10:55PM)			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	My Wife And Kids	Everybody Loves Raymond	King Of Queens	Becker	Monk		Friends	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23		Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monster						Get Backers	Spirits	Wazzup Wazzup	The Swan Season 2		Tru Calling (8:20PM)	Charmed (9:10PM)		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time

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CHOOSE YOUR Valentine SHOW

(Inquirer Entertainment is running a list of Valentine shows to choose from, starting today. To help concert-goers along, we asked the featured performers a uniform set of questions, including why they think their show would be the best pick.)

Divas in sync

DULCE, Toti Fuentes, Ivy Violan and Janet Basco harmonize on Love Day.

"Hearts in Season"
Stars: Janet Basco, Ivy Violan and Dulce
Guests: George Tagle and Miguel Castro
Musical director: Toti Fuentes
Stage director: Rico Mortel
Venue: Rigodon Ballroom, Manila Peninsula

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

Janet: Since I've been semi-retired, usually with quiet evenings, having good food and a relaxing conversation with my husband Johnny.

Ivy: I go out of town with my family.

Dulce: Traffic is bad all over the city, so we just stay at home.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you ever experienced?

Janet: Any day can be Valentine's, if you're in love. After 20 years of marriage, just knowing I'm loved by someone I love is special.

Ivy: My concert last year, "My Heart's Love" because HE was my date.

Dulce: I'm still looking forward to that. Hehehe!

What's your dream Valentine's date?

Janet: Dinner outdoors in Florence. It'll be dusk; there'll be a slight breeze, with the sun slowly vanishing on the horizon.

Ivy: Cozy and serene ambience; Italian food and red wine at my place.

Dulce: I'll join my husband fishing and we'll eat *nilagang mani* and *bayabas* at sea.

Other than your partner, who is your fantasy date?

Janet: Colin Firth!

Ivy: Bill Gates.

Dulce: No one comes close to my husband!

What's the most romantic love song ever?

Janet: "The Island." There is no sexier song.

Ivy: "How Did You Know?"

Dulce: "Never Ever Say Goodbye" by Willy Cruz.

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch this year?

Jahet and Ivy: Andy Williams.

Dulce: If only there's a Nana Mouskouri show . . .

Why should we watch your show? What can the audience expect?

Janet: This is the first time we are doing a show together. It'll be different because we are a trio of women and we'll be giving our all. The audience can expect pure singing.

Ivy: We will showcase the real us. No pretenses. Just having fun and really thankful that, after all these years, we are still here sharing the gift of music.

Dulce: We cherish beautiful memories together and that's what this show is all about.

Bayani San Diego Jr.

'Little Big Star' Cebu

From page A2-2

engers. But when the younger Robert started to bring home cash prizes from amateur singing contests in malls and radio stations in Cebu, Naomi began to dream again.

In this new dream she saw Robert shining in "Little Big Star." She also saw herself in him.

"We are tired of being poor," Naomi said. "Robert is our one chance at a better life."

This aspiration aspect of "Little Big Star" is not lost on Enrico Santos, business unit head of the show. "Most parents aspire to make their children bigger than what they have become," he said.

The success of "Little Big Star" in Manila has prompted the network to extend the search in Cebu, certainly a talent center in central Philippines. After all, the island city is home to pop stars Vina Morales, Sheryn Regis, Rizza Navales, and lately, Jimmy Marquez, a product of "Search for a Star in a Million" this season.

"There is much talent to be discovered here as well as in other places in the country," Santos said.

Which is why there are also plans to bring the talent search to Baguio during the flower festival month, and then to Davao City, and then maybe even in the United States.

"Just think of the many talented Fil-Ams over there," Santos said.

But he stressed that the show was looking to develop stars, not just "great vocalists or singers with perfect techniques, [but] the total package."

In April, the "total package" from Cebu will compete with his counterparts from Manila and from all over Luzon and Mindanao.

Meanwhile, Robert Villar Jr. was about to sing his solo spot on stage as Sarah Geronimo and about 20 other child contestants looked on.

"I hope he makes it," his mom Naomi prayed.

"Little Big Star" in Cebu is hosted by Sheryn Regis.

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ZATHURA 1:10/3:20/5:30/7:40/9:50	DON'T GIVE UP ON US 2:00/4:30/7:00/9:30	UNDERWORLD 2 12:30/2:50/5:10/7:30/9:50	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
THE MAID 12:20/2:30/4:40/6:50/9:00	HALF LIGHT 11:50/2:20/4:50/7:20/9:50	NARNIA 6:50/9:40 FUN WITH DICK & JANE	NARNIA 1:10/4:00 LITTLE MANHATTAN 6:50/9:3
RUMOR HAS IT 12:10/2:30/4:50/7:10/9:30	LITTLE MANHATTAN 12:30/2:40/4:50	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 12:40/2:55/5:10/7:25/9:40	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

ALIMALL CINEMAS

DON'T GIVE UP ON US 12:45/3:15/5:45/8:15	UNDERWORLD 2 1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40	ZATHURA 12:05/2:15/4:25/6:35/8:45
CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 1:45/4:00/6:15/8:30	HALF LIGHT 12:45/3:15/5:45/8:15	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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FEB 1 4:40 PUREFOODS vs AIR 21 7:35 GINEBRA vs RED BULL
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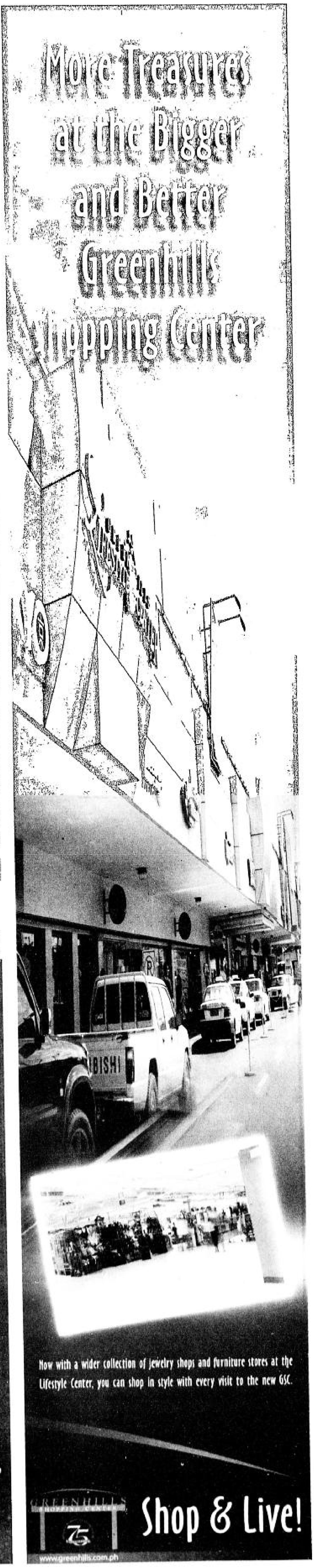
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1 ZATHURA • THX
2:15 4:40 7:05 9:30

2 ZATHURA
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

3 HALF LIGHT
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

4 UNDERWORLD 2
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

7 RUMOR HAS IT
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

8 THE MAID
1:25 3:35 4:45 7:55 10:00

9 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
Sneak Preview

10 JARHEAD
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 ZATHURA
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 HALF LIGHT
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 THE MAID
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:20 10:00

4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
Sneak Preview

6 UNDERWORLD 2
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

METRO EAST
682-8193 • 682-8199

1 RUMOR HAS IT
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

2 ZATHURA
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:00

4 UNDERWORLD 2
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
Sneak Preview

6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 9:00

7 The Chronicles of NARNIA
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

8 THE MAID
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES
935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 THE MAID
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 ZATHURA
6 The Chronicles of NARNIA
7 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE Sneak Preview

CITISQUARE MALABON
288-2575

1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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1 ZATHURA
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 FUN W/ DICK & JANE Sneak Preview
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

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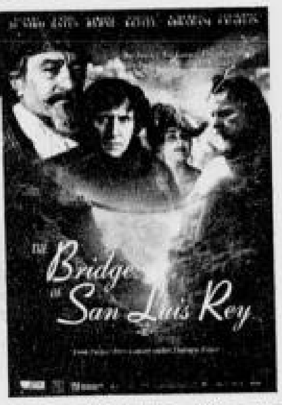
THE *Bridge* OF *San Luis Rey*



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3 THE FAMILY STONE
4 ZATHURA

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5 SAINT ANGE
6 ZATHURA

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4 THE EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
5 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
6 SAINT ANGE

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2 The Chronicles of NARNIA
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 THE FAMILY STONE
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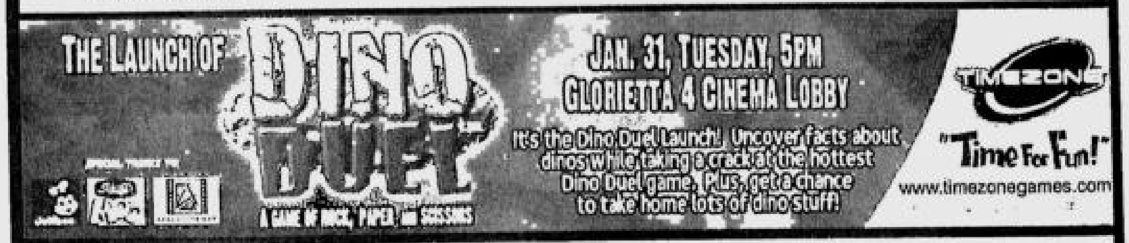

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 HALF LIGHT	2 THE MAID	3 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 ZATHURA	2 HALF LIGHT	3 THX UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION GUARANTEED SEATS	4 RUMOR HAS IT	5 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	6 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	7 THE MAID
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 ZATHURA	2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ZATHURA GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 RUMOR HAS IT GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HALF LIGHT GUARANTEED SEATS	5 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2	2 UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION	3 ZATHURA	4 HALF LIGHT	5 RUMOR HAS IT		
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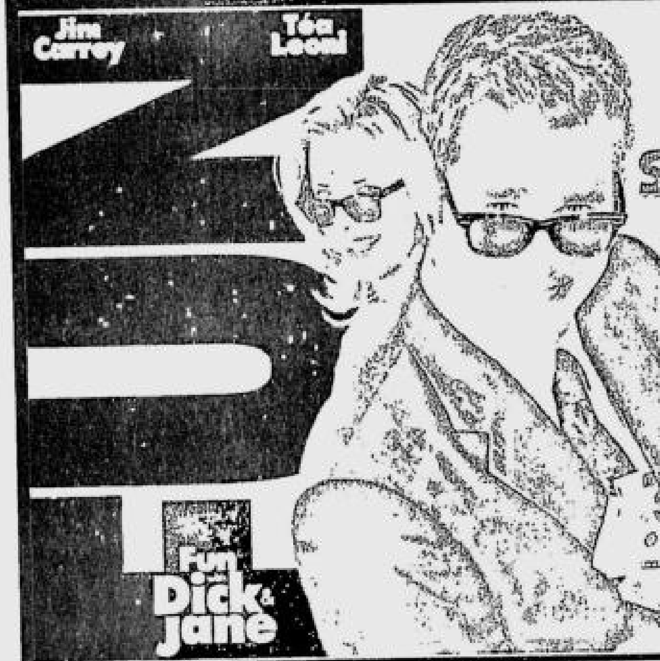

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Turning Japanese

From page A2-1

Oscar-nominated actor Ken Watanabe ("The Last Samurai") is the love interest; and the great Chinese actress Gong Li ("Farewell My Concubine") is an evil stepsister-like antagonist.

Interestingly, the three lead actresses are Chinese, which initially raised some eyebrows.

In a recent interview with the INQUIRER, the film's director, Rob Marshall (he directed the Oscar-winning "Chicago"), spoke about the challenges of making such a unique film. He candidly talked about his renowned cast, and how he survived a film set where three languages were simultaneously spoken.

Did you feel any pressure from the studio to try to anchor the film on a bankable name, like, say, Tom Cruise in "The Last Samurai"?

You know what ... I was impressed because the executives at Columbia Pictures didn't ask for that.

They gave you carte blanche?

Yes. It was risky and scary for them, but ultimately they realized that if we're gonna do this, we have to do it right. So I give them a lot of credit. Fortunately, they stuck to their guns.

How difficult was it to cast this film, specifically the lead role that went to Ziyi Zhang?

Very difficult. I had casting directors in America and London and Japan and China. I wanted to hire foreign actors, because I really wanted a sense of another place and time. And there were so many demands for the lead role—the bill was huge. I had to find an actor who could carry the film and [have] great emotional depth, be a beauty, be a brilliant dancer, and then she needed to speak English. I met many actors, and some had a little of that and a little of this. What Ziyi had that nobody else did was this inner spirit that doesn't give up. When I met with her, she [simply] claimed the role.

What were the challenges of working with a multilingual cast? Ziyi and Michelle speak English, but Gong Li speaks only Chinese and Ken Watanabe needs an interpreter.

It was an honor to be working with this cast; I couldn't believe I had assembled an all-star cast on this level. These are the greatest stars in their countries, and here I had them all in one film. So that was exciting. It was difficult too, let me tell you. I'd be speaking English and it would be translated into Japanese and Chinese at the same time. Sometimes actors couldn't speak to each other except in the scene, in English. So it was this very odd way of working. But after a while, after weeks of rehearsals, by the time we got to the set to film, it felt natural. To me, great acting transcends language.

Do you think Hollywood is ready for an Asian superstar to break into the mainstream?

They'd better be. I think Ziyi, Gong Li and Michelle Yeoh are [among] the greatest actors in the world.

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1 (DOLBY) ZATHURA GP
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3 (DOLBY) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2 GP
4 (DOLBY) HALF LIGHT PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) SOONG SISTERS / NARNIA GP

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) UNDERWORLD-2
2 (SDDS) KING KONG
3 (DTS) RUMOR HAS IT
4 GOLD (DTS) ZATHURA
5 GOLD THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
6 GOLD (SDDS) ZATHURA
7 GOLD (DOLBY) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
8 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
9 HALF LIGHT
10 THE MAID

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD 2
2 (DOLBY) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
3 (DOLBY) ZATHURA
4 (DOLBY) HALF LIGHT

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 ZATHURA
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
3 THE MAID
4 UNDERWORLD-2

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 (DOLBY) ZATHURA
3 (DOLBY) CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN-2
4 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) UNDERWORLD-2
2 ZATHURA
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 THE MAID
5 UNANG TIKIM

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium
Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 "DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 (DTS) ZATHURA
3 (DOLBY) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
4 RUMORS HAS IT

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 (DOLBY) ZATHURA
3 (DTS) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
4 RUMOR HAS IT

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 560.6771
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 (DOLBY) KUTOB

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) ZATHURA
5 UNDERWORLD-2

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 ST. ANGIE
3 BLOODFIST
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 FAMILY STONE
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 (DOLBY) JARHEAD
4 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 5433994
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 JARHEAD
3 ZATHURA
4 UNDERWORLD-2

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 UNDERWORLD-2
2 KING KONG
3 ZATHURA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 796.3320
1 ZATHURA
2 KUTOB
3 (DOLBY) DON'T GIVE UP ON US

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 ZATHURA
2 JUST LIKE HEAVEN

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4740
1 BLUE MOON
2 LOLIPOP

THEATRES
Pacific Mall Cabanatuan
Telephone No (044) 600 3095
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 IN HER SHOES

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 JUST LIKE HEAVEN
2 ZATHURA
3 BLUE MOON
4 FAMILY STONE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 ST. ANGIE
2 MASARAP ANG BAWAL
3 UNANG TIKIM
4 BLOODFIST

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 ZATHURA
4 UNANG TIKIM
5 TERRORIST HUNTER

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 BLUE MOON
3 (DOLBY) ZATHURA
4 JUST LIKE HEAVEN

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THE DESCENT
LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
MASAHISTA

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
2 KUTOB
3 (DOLBY) THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
4 DOMINO D/W TRUTH ABOUT LOVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 FAMILY STONE
2 ZATHURA
3 JARHEAD
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 KUTOB
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 KING KONG
2 SAMBAHIN ANG PURI

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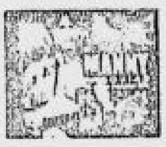
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08:25LFS/09:00LMF/10:40END
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
01:40FS/02:10MF/04:25/06:40
08:25LFS/09:00LMF/10:45END
MEGAMALL
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
11:00FS/11:15MF/01:20/03:25/05:30/07:35
09:10LFS/09:40LMF/11:15END
CEBU (032) 231-1878
1 CHRONICLES OF NARNIA
11:20FS/11:30MF/02:00/04:30/07:00
09:20LFS/09:30LMF/11:50END
2 UNDERWORLD EVOLUTION
11:20FS/11:30MF/01:30/03:30/05:30/07:30
09:15LFS/09:30LMF/11:15END
3 ZATHURA
11:20FS/11:30MF/01:30/03:30/05:30/07:30
09:10LFS/09:30LMF/11:10END
movietime

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 BIG TIME
3 ZATHURA
4 NARNIA
5 HALF LIGHT
6 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
7 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
8 RUMOR HAS IT
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 UNDERWORLD 2
11 THE MAID
12 KING KONG

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 BIG TIME
2 BLUE MOON
3 KING KONG
4 NARNIA
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
7 UNDERWORLD 2
8 ZATHURA
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 THE MAID
11 RUMOR HAS IT
12 WHO'S YOUR DADDY

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 ZATHURA
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 BIG TIME
5 NARNIA
6 THE MAID
7 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
8 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
5 ZATHURA
6 RUMOR HAS IT
7 NARNIA
8 BIG TIME
9 HALF LIGHT
10 THE MAID

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 ZATHURA
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
6 NARNIA
7 HALF LIGHT
8 THE MAID
9 BIG TIME
10 RESERVED

SM CITY MANILA
1 BIG TIME
2 RUMOR HAS IT
3 NARNIA
4 UNDERWORLD 2
5 ZATHURA
6 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
7 LITTLE MANHATTAN
8 WHO'S YOUR DADDY
9 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
10 THE MAID
11 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
12 HALF LIGHT

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
3 ZATHURA
4 UNDERWORLD 2

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 ZATHURA

SM CITY SAN LAZARO
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 ZATHURA
3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 THE MAID
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA
1 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 ZATHURA
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 ZATHURA
2 NARNIA
3 BIG TIME
4 ST. ANGE
5 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY BACOOR
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2
2 THE MAID
3 ZATHURA
4 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
5 UNDERWORLD 2
6 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
7 KING KONG
8 NARNIA

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 NARNIA
2 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 ZATHURA

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 ZATHURA
2 FAMILY STONE
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 NARNIA

SM CITY LUCENA
1 NARNIA
AND PAGDADALAGA NI MAXIMO OLIVEROS
THE FOG
DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO
1 NARNIA
2 ZATHURA
3 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE
4 DON'T GIVE UP ON US

SM CITY MARILAO
1 ZATHURA
2 NARNIA
3 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 2

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 ZATHURA
2 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
3 NARNIA
4 THE FOG

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 NARNIA
2 UNDERWORLD 2
3 ZATHURA
4 FAMILY STONE
5 BIG TIME
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
8 THE MAN

SM CITY ILOILO
1 BEAUTIFUL BOXER
2 RESERVED
3 NARNIA
4 ZATHURA
5 DON'T GIVE UP ON US
6 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
7 RESERVED
8 FAMILY STONE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 ZATHURA
2 THE MAN
3 FAMILY STONE
4 EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE
5 BIG TIME
6 NARNIA

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 NARNIA
2 IN HER SHOES
3 ZATHURA
4 AN UNFINISHED LIFE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTINGS, MTRCB RATINGS, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Quite a good start for Film Year 2006

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE BELEAGUERED FILIPINO MOVIE INDUSTRY was heartened earlier this month when the first local film of 2006, Joyce Bernal's "Don't Give Up on Us," scored a direct hit at the box office.

This is a good start for the year for the languishing film industry, so hopes are high that out moviemakers will be doing better in 2006 than they did last year.

This dovetails nicely with what we've been saying all along, that local movies have been down for so long that there's nowhere else they can go but up.

So, enough of facilely bewailing the "death" of Filipino films. Let's work together, filmmakers and moviegoers alike, to turn our films' flagging fortunes around.

After all, the Filipino movie industry is the only one we've got, so let's collectively rush to its succor—film people making it a point to produce good movies, and viewers going out of their way to support them.

Instructively, a major part of the current rescue effort is the rise of digital filmmaking in these parts.

Some industry observers believe that fully half of last year's feature film output was contributed by digital movies. In fact, there are those who believe that the ratio in favor of digital features is even higher than that.

Other encouraging signs: The digital feature, "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," is the first Filipino movie to have been tapped for competition screening in the prestigious Sundance Film festival.

The good mainstream theater showing of "Maximo Oliveros" and "Big Time" also encourages new filmmakers to release their digital movies in theaters, so more people can see them.

More new filmmakers are competing in the second Cinemalaya digital festival for alternative films. We hope that a fresh batch of quality films will emerge this year, to join the ranks of standout 2005 Cinemalaya productions like "Maximo," "Big Time," "Pepot Artista," "ICU Bed No. 7" and "Room Boy."

Established directors like **Eddie Romero, Marilou Diaz-Abaya** and **Laurice Guillen** are making their own digital features. This enables them to shoot the movies they really want to make, and thus further enriches local audiences' viewing options in terms of themes, plots and characters.

Ironically, while digital filmmakers are moving into new areas, mainstream studios are still bogged down in safe formats like fantasy, romance and melodrama.

When will they get the message that today's moviegoers are bored with traditional movie formats, and want to be excited and surprised by innovative and edgy film fare?

'Venom'

THE TERRIFYING thriller "Venom" is a voodoo horror tale set deep in the swamps of Louisiana. Its plot revolves around a group of teenagers fighting for their lives against a mysterious evil force.

In the film, voodoo sucks up the evil spirits of the dead and deposits them a suitcase full of snakes. When a local bad boy meets a grisly demise, the snakes are unleashed, and the young scourge is resurrected. Leads include **Bijou Phillips, Rick Cramer** and **Agnes Bruckner.**

'Fun with Dick & Jane'

THE NEW comedy film, "Fun with Dick & Jane," starring **Jim Carrey** and **Tea Leoni,** will have sneak previews today and tomorrow in select theaters. The movie has already grossed over $100-M in the US.

It tells the story of an executive (Carrey) whose years of hard work finally pay off when he's promoted to vice president. But the company is quickly destroyed by an Enron-like calamity—and he is left holding the bag.

However, Dick and his wife Jane (Leoni) take their cue from his corrupt employer and decide to teach big business a lesson it won't soon forget!

Survival kit for the US film biz

MANY people dream of making it in Hollywood, but only a few succeed because they don't have what it takes to survive in that world film capital's ego- and intrigue-oriented waters.

Well, veteran movie producer **David Chasman** has come up with a survival kit of tips for people who want to succeed in the international movie business—so, let's learn from him by listening to his voice of extensive experience.

Some on-target tips and quotes from Chasman's book, titled, appropriately enough, "Everything I Needed to Know About Succeeding in Hollywood I Learned from My Pit-Bull":

- "The greatest testimonial to the vitality of the art of film is that, for a hundred years, it has survived the best efforts of businessmen to kill it."
- "Screenwriting is a profession in which you have to keep proving your talent to people who have none."
- "Let me tell you something about how studio executives relate to movies: They have no love for the art; they have no respect for the craft; they have no grasp of the business; they have no knowledge of its history; and they have no feeling for what it is that audiences want out of movies. Are there exceptions to this melancholy rule? Yes. But not enough to make a significant statistical difference."
- "The studio executive who starts out by saying, 'Let me be perfectly honest with you,' is usually about to tell a lie."
- "Able studio executives (there *are* a handful) recognize that they should function as gentle midwives to the birth of movies. The majority, however, are preoccupied with desperate attempts to associate themselves with hits, distance themselves from flops and, in general, echo the opinions of their superiors in the studio pecking order."
- "In the savagely competitive arena of Hollywood, filmmaking failures have very few friends. Successes have no friends at all—just hangers-on."
- "In Hollywood, any raging egomaniac who wields enough money to tyrannize everybody in the immediate vicinity is described as a 'perfectionist'—as if his every transient, half-assed, lunatic whim represented some immutable criterion of flawlessness."
- "For the great majority of film people, working in movies bears an amazing resemblance to unemployment."
- "The power of a superstar is not mystical; it has a sound economic basis. A superstar decides he likes a script, and suddenly, 100 people have well-paying jobs."
- "The production and distribution of motion pictures is so chancy that it makes betting on horses seem like a solid, low-risk, predictable business."
- "In the baroque logic of modern Hollywood, the studio believes that someone who has produced four consecutive flops is a safer bet than someone who has yet to produce a film. And the producer of *six* consecutive flops is frequently hired to run the studio!"

> Enough of bewailing the 'death' of Filipino movies; let's work together to turn things around

Jim Carrey
Téa Leoni
Fun with Dick & Jane
Coming Soon

SNEAK PREVIEWS
Robinsons Movieworld
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dasmariñas•starmills,pampanga
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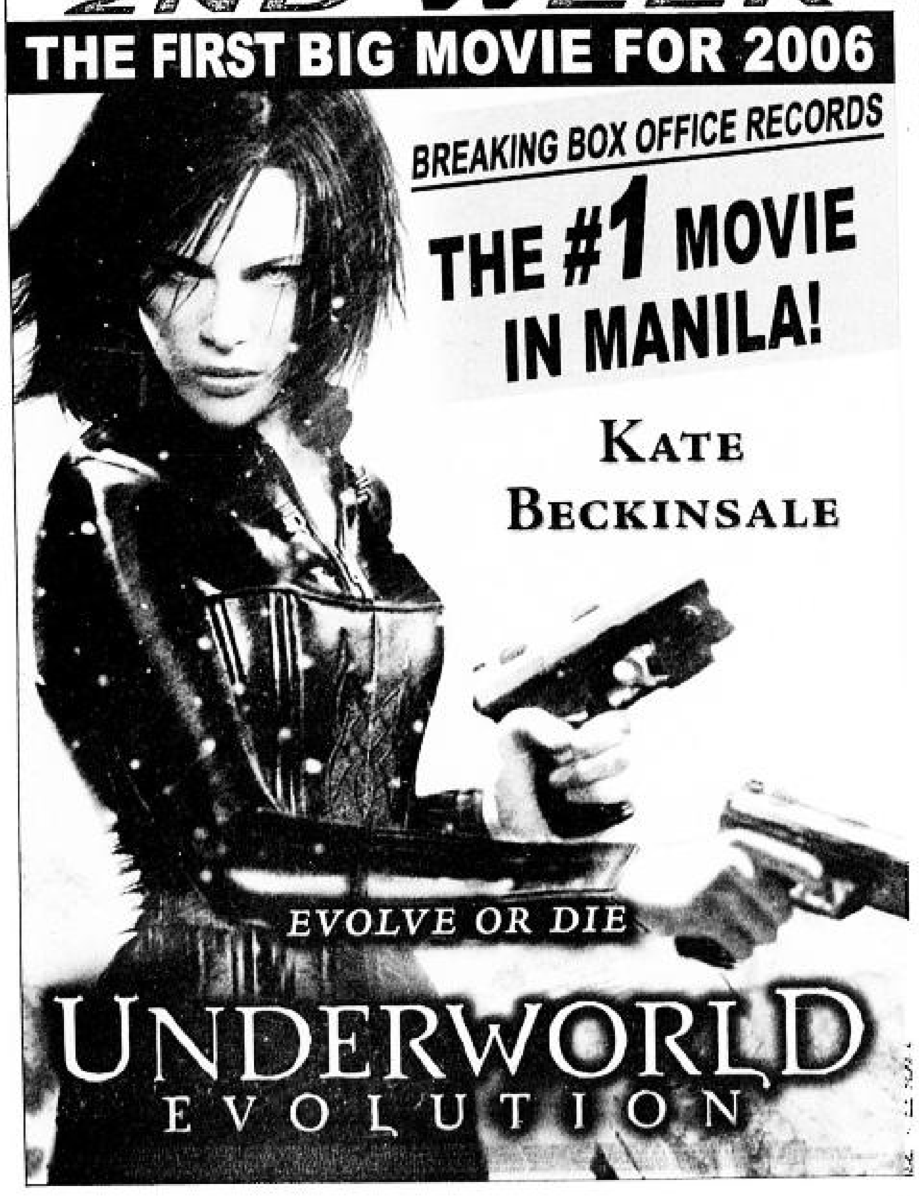

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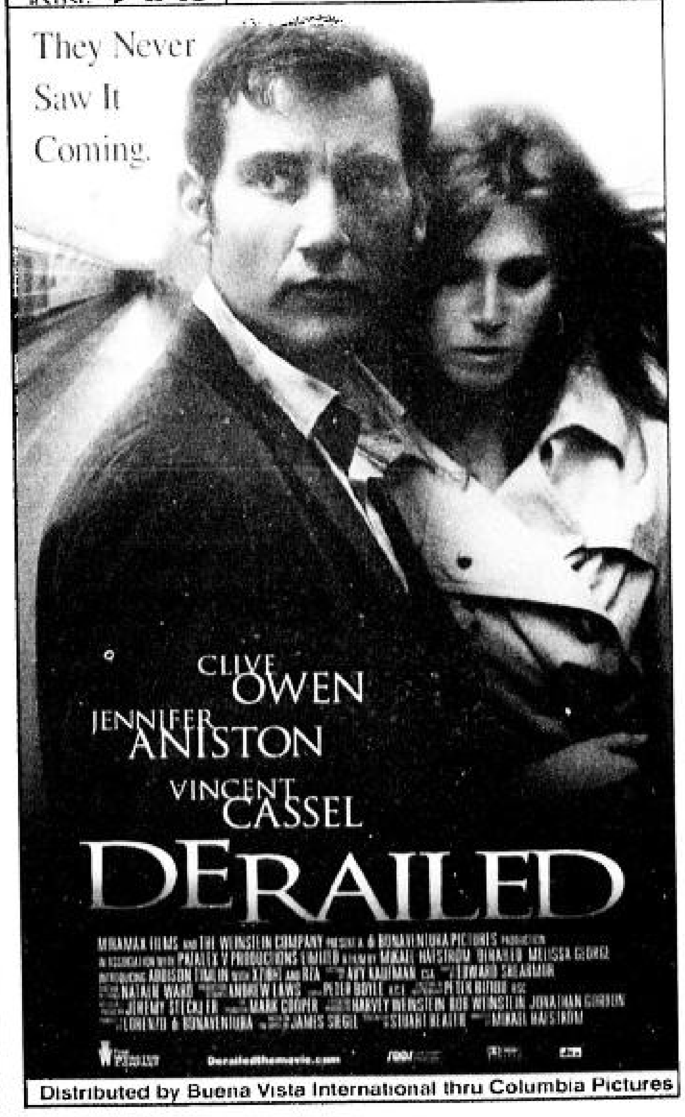

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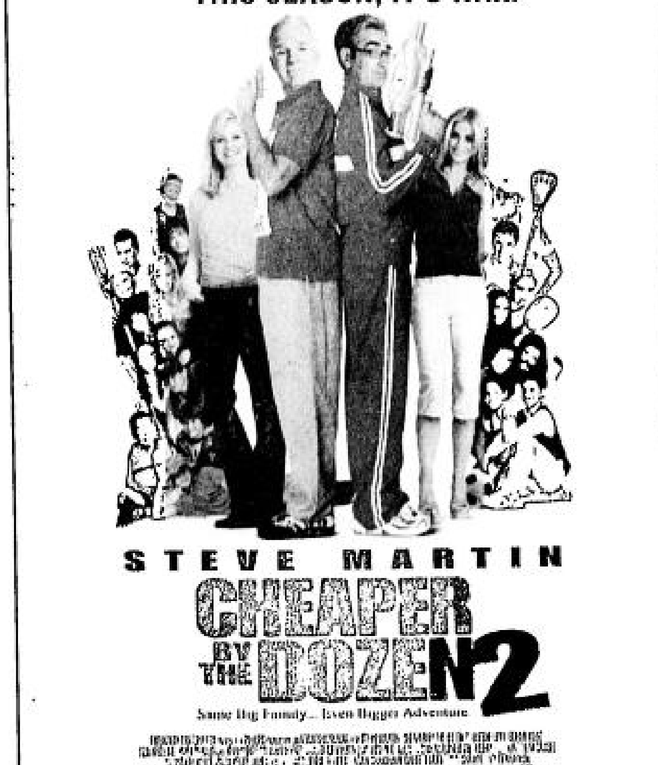

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Private firms less optimistic on '06 growth

By Doris C. Dumlao

BSP poll shows GDP seen expanding by only 4.8%

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY will likely expand by only 4.8 percent this year, or way below the government's minimum target of 5.7 percent, according to a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' poll of 21 private institutions.

The survey indicated expectations that the country would turn in the same 4.8-percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) for next year, while inflation was seen to rise to 7.2 percent this year before easing to 5.9 percent in 2007.

Private analysts and economists raised their inflation forecasts for 2006 to account for the impact of the scheduled increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent by Feb. 1, the BSP noted.

Most of the institutions polled by the BSP have financial interests in the country: AB Capital Securities, ABN-Amro, ATR-Kim Eng Securities, Banco de Oro Universal Bank, Bank of America, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Citigroup, Credit Lyonnais, Deutsche Bank, Development Bank of Singapore, Equitable PCIBank, HSBC, ING Bank, Land Bank of the Philippines, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Multinational Investment Bank and UBS Warburg.

Also included were private think tanks and research firms Wallace Business Forum, Business Monitor International, Economist Intelligence Unit and Ideaglobal.

The mean forecast for real GDP growth of 4.8 percent for this year and next was slower than the government's target as the respondents took into account risks to the domestic economy such as volatile oil prices, which could slow consumer spending down.

However, the BSP said private sector analysts acknowledged that the promised increases in public spending and renewed investor confidence would support the economy's expansion in 2006.

The highest GDP growth forecast for 2006 was given by ATR Kim Eng Securities at 5.7 percent while Credit Lyonnais was the most pessimistic with a projection of 3.4 percent.

ABN-Amro was the most bullish for 2007 with a GDP growth projection of 6 percent while Credit Lyonnais likewise gave the lowest forecast of 2.3 percent.

The highest inflation forecast for this year came from Banco de Oro at 8.5 percent while Business Monitor gave the lowest forecast of 5.2 percent.

The BSP, for its part, expects inflation this year to range between 7.5 and 8.1 percent, peaking during the first semester.

Private analysts cited some mit-

PRIVATE/ B3

US firm bullish on RP

By Michelle V. Remo

US-BASED BEAR, Stearns & Co. Inc. has given a positive outlook on the Philippines for 2006, predicting that the country would easily sustain its fiscal gains last year and hit an economic growth higher than the previous year's.

"We believe that the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo will continue to reduce its deficit in 2006, the current account will remain in surplus, largely owing to the growth of overseas workers' remittances, and foreign investments seem to be picking up," the bank said in a report.

The foreign investment bank said it believed that the Philippine government's target of reducing the budget deficit to only P125 billion this year would be achieved with ease, coming from a positive momentum last year.

In 2005, the budget deficit was trimmed to P146.5 billion, much lower than the official ceiling of P180 billion. The better deficit figure was attributed to tighter spending and higher revenues generated by the treasury department.

The Bureau of the Treasury earlier said its earnings came from investments in dollar-denominated instruments and dividends from state-owned firms.

Bear, Stearns said it expected the government to privatize more of its power-related assets this year to further help improve its fiscal health.

It said the Philippines would likely achieve a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of between 5 and 6 percent this year.

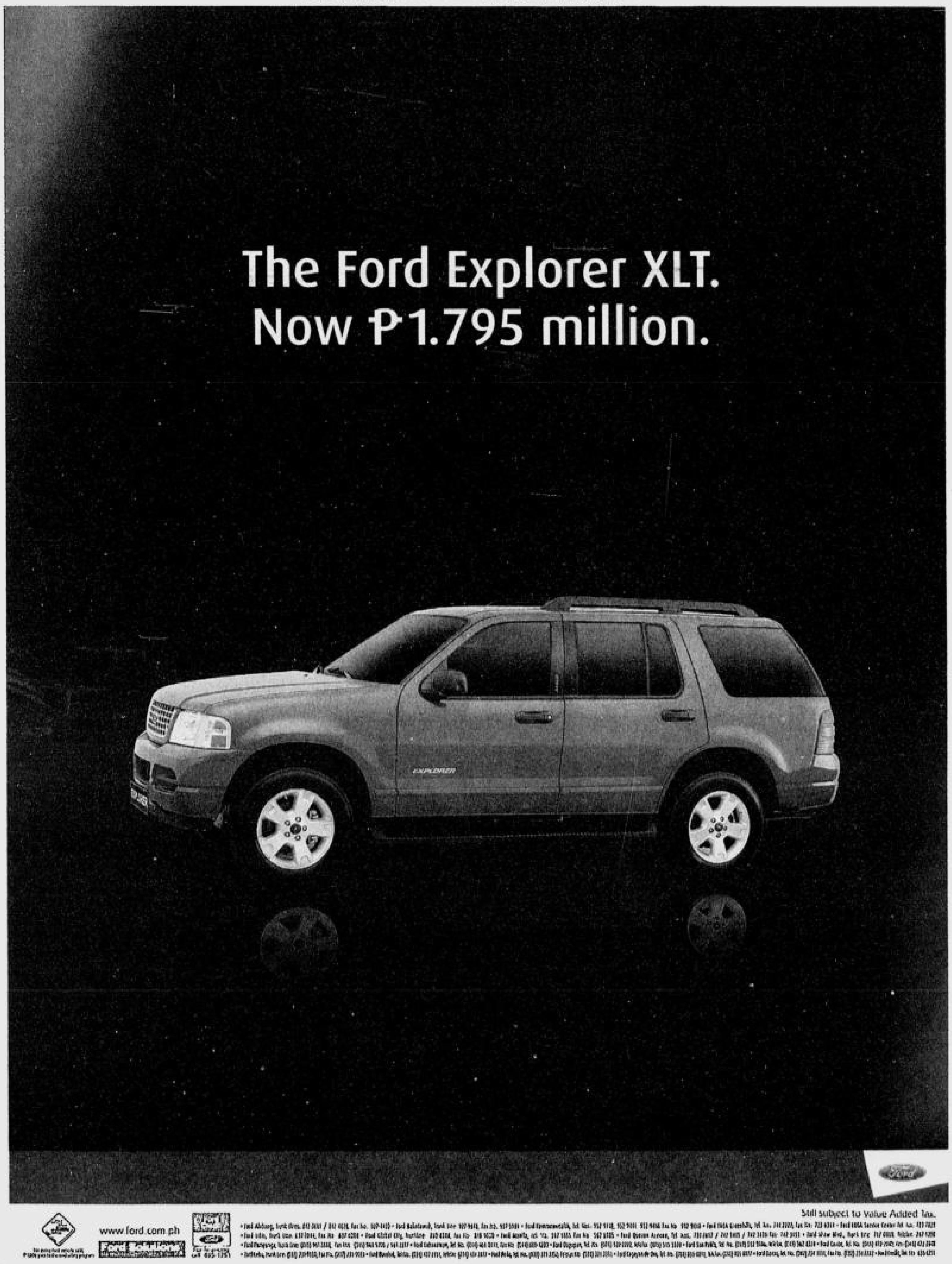
The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said the country's GDP growth likely hovered between 4.8

US FIRM/ B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

Fort stirrings /B3
URC, RFM to tap new export marts /B2
BOI eases rules on auto export program /B10

(Before running this ad, the publication investigated if this was for real.)



Fiscal management 101

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

GOOD NEWS: THE GOVERNMENT DID not overspend as much as it intended to in 2005.

The government's fiscal deficit, or the excess of its expenditures over its revenues, amounted to P146.5 billion for the full year 2005, well below the P180 billion projected for the year and the P187 billion posted in 2004.

Total revenues of P795.7 billion exceeded the target by 1.6 percent, while government spending amounting to P942.2 billion was also P21.2 billion or 2.2 percent less than programmed.

Not-so-good news: things could have been a lot better, if not for the combined collection shortfall of P21.9 billion incurred by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the Bureau of Customs (BOC). BIR was off its target of P547 billion by P12.4 billion, or 2.3 percent short. BOC was off its P151.2-billion target by P9.5 billion, or 6.3 percent short.

Non-recurring revenues

Note that the spending cutback was about as big as the collection shortfalls. Thus, without these shortfalls, government wouldn't have had to hold back on its spending. It is of course possible that part of the under-spending represented actual savings without sacrificing results.

That would be genuinely good news. But even if this were the case, government could have avoided borrowing as much as it did to finance the deficit, if only tax collections had met targets.

But wait a minute. If total revenues exceeded the target, but tax collections fell far short, where did the excess revenues come from?

In the 1990s, we used to get a lot of "non-recurring revenues" from proceeds of privatization—i.e. selling off government assets. Not anymore. Most of what the government should or could sell had already been sold. Sale of the remaining big-ticket items, like the National Power Corporation and the power transmission company Transco, continue to be held back by legal and financial hurdles.

Treasury earnings

This time, it was not privatization, but the interest income from the huge amounts of cash held and invested by the National Treasury that saved the day.

They made P70.6 billion in interest earnings in 2005, almost double their targeted P36.6 billion. How could Treasury hold and invest such large sums of money that they could in turn "play with" in the money markets? Don't we keep saying that the government is cash-strapped? Well, not quite—for two reasons.

One, Treasury often borrows money ahead of actual need. They do this in order to take advantage of lower borrowing costs when such opportunities arise with the movements in interest rates or exchange rates.

Two, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) may, for one reason or another, delay release of funds for projects of various agencies and local governments, even though the money is actually there.

We perennially hear government agencies or local governments complain about such delayed budget releases. DBM's frequent defense is the need for cash management: the money may still be tied up in money market investments, or even if there was free cash, government may still wish to make additional money out of short-term investments with the funds.

The longer DBM can delay release of funds, the more Treasury can earn interest income from the money.

At what cost?

Obviously, these Treasury earnings can come at a cost. Budget delays can be costly to the economy as a whole when agency and LGU projects suffer as a result, especially when timely releases are critical to achieving desired results.

Delay in budget releases for a Department of Health program to combat an epidemic can be outright disastrous, for example. Or construction projects can incur large cost overruns when work that should be done in the dry season slides into the rainy season due to budget delays.

It is worth asking, then, whether the costs of project delays that result from delayed fund releases are worth the additional revenues earned by Treasury from idle cash balances.

In 2005, Treasury made P34 billion more than they expected. How much of this were earnings from funds that came about because budgets for certain infrastructure projects were deliberately withheld?

Indeed, both the second and third quarter GNP/GDP growth figures for 2005 show public construction not just slowing down, but falling by 4.8 percent from their corresponding 2004 levels—a tremendous drop that had an impact on the overall economy's performance and ability to generate jobs.

Keynes lives

Our lower-than-programmed government deficit is received as good news in the financial markets. And it should be, as it indicates improving macroeconomic stability especially given the fiscal crisis our government has found itself in.

But as the above discussion shows, and as basic economics teaches us, a lower deficit may not be an entirely good thing.

John Maynard Keynes got his name into the economics textbooks by demonstrating that joblessness and a sluggish economy may be overcome via increased deficit spending.

In our case, longer-term macroeconomic stability can come at the cost of short-term economic well-being, and vice versa—a balancing act our economic managers face constantly. You can't have a free lunch.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

URC, RFM to tap new export marts

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORP. (URC) expects its exports this year to hit $20 million, a 40-percent jump from last year's figures, said URC regional export manager Carlo Villaraza.

Villaraza said during the recent Good News Kapihan at the Tavern On The Square in Makati that URC has named five priority markets for its biscuits and snacks, and possibly its C2 beverage.

Food and beverage giant RFM Corp. is also looking at growing its export business.

RFM vice-president Imelda Madarang said during the Kapihan that RFM planned to tap the $1.5-billion halal market.

Halal refers to food that Muslim dietary laws allow Muslims to eat.

RFM's export products include mixes under its White King flour brand, such as bibingka, puto mix, and its Selecta Moo chocolate milk brand.

Madarang said RFM expected to boost export sales this year to around $7 million from $3.4 million last year.

Villaraza, on the other hand, identified its target markets as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand.

"Our vision is to globalize the Jack & Jill brand. We are starting with countries nearby that are strategic," Villaraza said.

He told INQUIRER separately that URC was looking at distributing its green tea C2 drink in South Korea.

To boost its international operations, URC put up two factories in China, and one each in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

RFM, meanwhile, currently exports products to 35 countries, the bulk of which goes to the United States of America, Canada, Hawaii and Guam.

It also exports to the Middle East, Pacific Islands, India, Europe and Japan.

DoCoMo to buy 7% of PLDT from Japan affiliate NTT

By Clarissa S. Batino

NTT DOCOMO, JAPAN'S LARGEST mobile player, tomorrow will sign an agreement to buy the 7-percent Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. stake of its affiliate, NTT Communications Corp., company sources said.

The Japanese 3G operator, according to sources, is also planning to purchase additional shares from the market within the first quarter to further raise its stake in PLDT to about 10 to 12 percent.

The board of directors of PLDT is also expected to approve in tomorrow's meeting the entry of NTT DoCoMo into the country's largest communications company.

DoCoMo affiliate NTT Communications, which holds 13.98 percent of PLDT, will end up with about seven percent stake in the Philippine firm.

First Pacific Co. Ltd, the Hong Kong-based conglomerate and PLDT's largest shareholder, said

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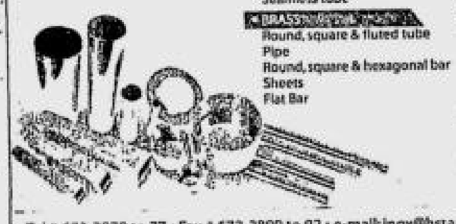

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BSP okays bid of Metrobank to issue $125-M tier-1 capital

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has approved the application of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. to issue up to $125 million in hybrid tier 1 or core capital, the first bank to obtain approval for this new type of equity instrument.

The BSP's policy-making Monetary Board also approved $129.5 million in fresh borrowings by the national government from Japan's Bank for International Cooperation for the Agno River integrated irrigation, according to BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

The fresh credit facility has a maturity of 30 years, inclusive of a 10-year grace period, at an interest rate of 1.5 percent a year.

Metrobank is the first local bank to take advantage of the new guidelines released by the BSP allowing financial institutions to use hybrid capital to address stringent global banking requirements.

These requirements include the shift to the new International Accounting Standards (IAS) in 2005 and the implementation of Basel 2 by the year 2007. The International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) had set stricter rules on how transactions and other events should be reflected in financial statements. The standards are now being applied worldwide.

"With this approval from the BSP, our issuance of the hybrid tier 1 capital can now progress," said Metrobank president Antonio S. Abacan Jr. Hybrid tier 1 capital instruments have equity-like features that have made them acceptable as Tier 1 capital. They may be in the form of unsecured, subordinated debt or preferred shares with step-up feature.

Metrobank will issue securities that will not be callable for 10 years, while coupon payments will be deferrable and non-cumulative.

Abacan said Metrobank had already adjusted its accounting system to comply with the IAS and IFRS for its financial reporting in 2005.

In addition to the hybrid tier 1 capital, Abacan said that the bank would also pursue a primary rights offering this year.

"We are now looking at the market and for the right timing to issue the rights offer," he explained.

Metrobank remains as the Philippines' biggest bank with consolidated assets of P586.5 billion as of Dec. 29, 2005, P56 billion higher than its closest rival. It has a growing international presence in the United States, Asia and Europe with more than 800 international and domestic branches, offices, subsidiaries and affiliates.

Fort stirrings

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

PHILREALTY STARTED ADVERTISING last week its second condominium project in The Fort, after pre-selling 85 percent of the first 34-story residential tower in just a year.

What the property developer did not say was that it had nudged up the price of a unit in Icon, as the condo project is called, to an average of P98,000 a square meter, from only P90,000/sqm last year when the first of the twin towers was launched.

At that price level, the Icon is now competing with the likes of Serendra, the premium low-level condos being developed by Ayala Land at the other side of The Fort beside Market! Market!

But then again, the Icon is being built on the last piece of the Manila Golf-ridge row, offering even better vantage point of the Central Park-like skyline than its class-leading neighbor, the Pacific Plaza Towers, home to Imelda Marcos and Manuel V. Pangilinan.

While units in Pacific Plaza are in the 300-sqm range, Icon's come in more affordable 36-sqm studios to 91-sqm, two-bedroom units, an indication that, despite their reputed fabulous wealth, Manila's 400's appetite for high-end, large condos had been satiated.

And it is the middle-class segment, particularly the overseas medical, IT professionals and foreigners with Philippine links, that Icon and the industry are now chasing after.

With only one foreign roadshow, Icon had already sold 25 percent of its first tower to overseas buyers. This figure could easily rise to 40 percent for the next tower, according to project developer Rally Martinez, now that Icon has a 24-hour, 1-800 number in the United States and an Internet gateway credit card payment system in place.

Billionaire bequeaths

THE CASH-STRAPPED GMA administration is suddenly P21-billion richer because of the recent Supreme Court PLDT ruling, thanks to the damning testimonies of Unilab patriarch Jose Yao Campos, his son Jose Jr., investment adviser Rolando Gapud and other Unilab executives.

The Supreme Court noted that the Camposes and the Unilab group gave clear and unequivocal testimonies pointing to the late President Marcos as the beneficial owner of the "ill-gotten" PLDT block being claimed by the Cojuangcos, the Yuchengcos, the Marcoses and the government.

The gist of the Campos/Unilab testimonies is that they all had acted as fronts for Marcos, whom the Campos patriarch had known since the late president was still a congressman, in acquiring control of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in 1977 from the previous American owners.

Money-go-round

- DESPITE their five days of daily concerts in Manila and key provincial cities, the '60s-icon Lettermen will hit the ground running as soon as the group returns to the United States, with two shows scheduled in Michigan and Pennsylvania this weekend.
- FOR its annual winter promo, Northwest is offering Philippine residents a 50-percent off on companion economy-class ticket purchased through its website from now until Feb. 25. Valid for six months, the fare allows a Feb. 1 to March 15 departure out of Manila, with one free stopover within routing, except Japan, permitted.
- Because of the recent peso appreciation, the local Big Mac was, by Jan. 9 exchange rates, one US cent more expensive than a Big Mac in Hong Kong, according to the Economist's Big Mac index. The annual fast-food indicator for purchasing-power parity is based on the price of the Big Mac in the United States, where the state-side burger was being sold at $3.15 an order. Dollar-wise, the Big Mac in the Philippines costs $1.56, even slightly more expensive than Indonesia's ($1.54), Thailand's ($1.51) and Malaysia's ($1.47). The world's cheapest Big Mac? Where else but in China, at $1.30.

Heard through the grapevine

CONTROVERSIAL importer Lucio Co is acquiring a 6.5-hectare property in Novaliches from Land Bank, directly in front of the SM mall. Co apparently plans to put up yet another branch of Pure Gold department store, and hopes to pick up some business away from the crowd-drawing SM.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Private firms . . .

From page B1

igating factors that would offset the upward pressures on inflation, specifically the peso's continued appreciation that could reduce the import bill, favorable agricultural production and reduced spending compared to last year.

Some analysts also pointed out that rising foreign interest rates should keep the BSP from easing its monetary policy, thus keeping inflation from rising steadily.

"Monetary policy in the months ahead will continue to be aimed at responding to the second-round effects of cost-push shocks, build-up in demand pressure due to excessive expansion in the money supply, and the inflationary consequences of exchange rate volatility arising from narrowing interest rate differentials," BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said on Friday.

US firm bullish . . .

From page B1

and 5.1 percent last year partly because of the lower agricultural output resulting from poor weather conditions.

The sluggish performance of the export sector, due to a decline in the global demand for electronics, was also blamed for the lower-than-expected growth last year. Electronics account for about 70 percent of the country's exports.

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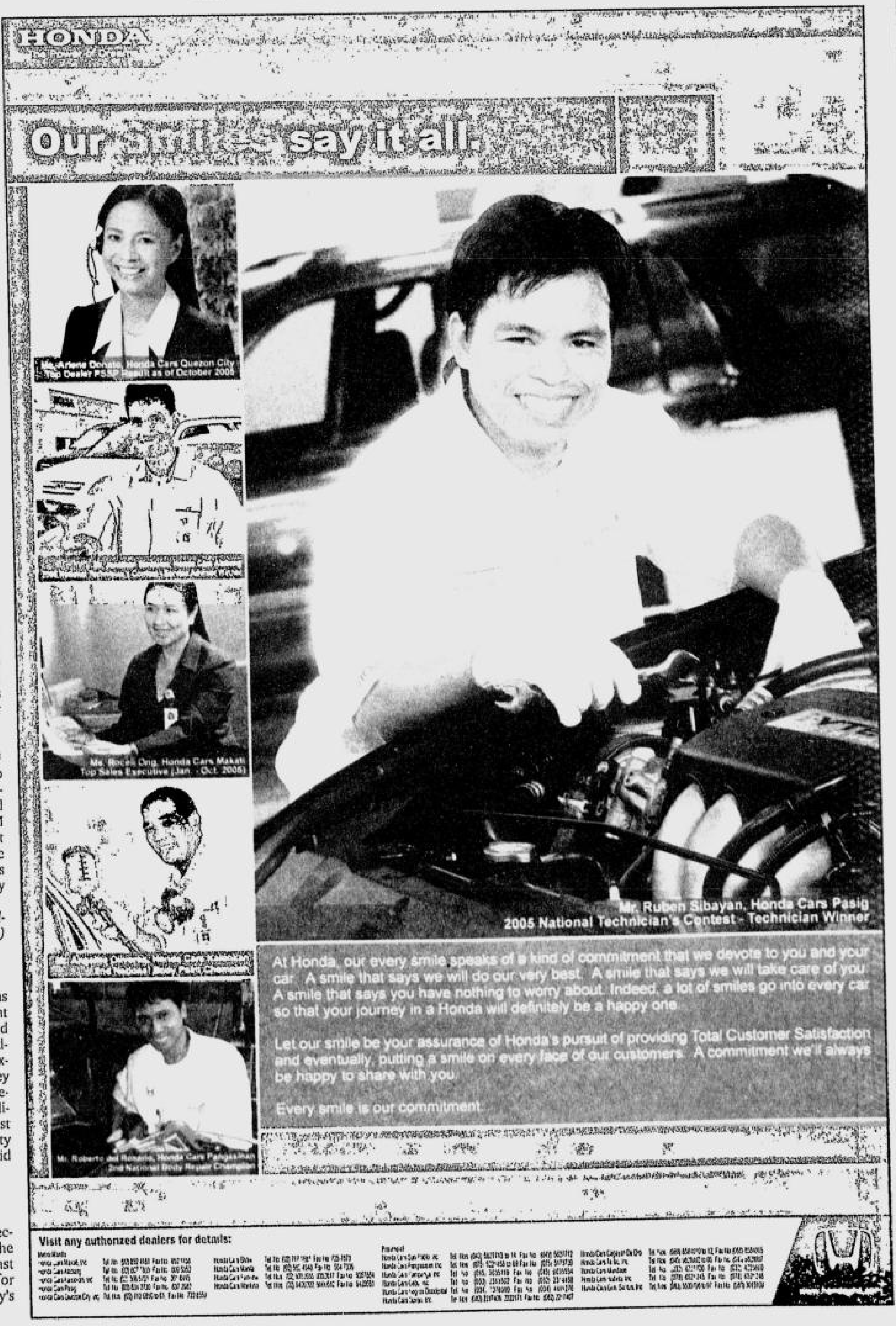
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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Century Canning boosts operations with GlobeSolutions

LEADING CANNED GOODS MANUfacturer Century Canning Corporation has strengthened its communications capabilities by renewing and expanding its partnership with GlobeSolutions, Globe Telecom's corporate business wireless solutions arm. The most recent addition to the roster of Globe services availed by Century Canning, the Corporate Ringback Tone, will enable them to maximize the potential of mobile phones as a marketing tool.

Century Canning has been using Globe's mobile and wireline services to facilitate its business operations for more than five years. Its collaboration with Globe includes the provision of mobile phone lines for employees, in addition to data services from GlobeQUEST and Globelines landline services. The continued growth of the partnership has led Century Canning to subscribe to one of GlobeSolutions' latest corporate value-added services, the Corporate Ringback Tone. With this feature, clients and other business contacts calling the Globe cellphones of their sales or marketing personnel will hear the company's brand jingles, thus helping to promote brand recall.

Century Canning Corp director Leo Po expressed appreciation for GlobeSolutions' valuable support as a business partner. "We are glad to continue this partnership, since the services provided by Globe have truly helped our company to become more productive. We look forward to making full use of the possibilities presented by GlobeSolutions services," he said.

Century Canning is also exploring the potential of other value-added services offered by GlobeSolutions, such as the Tracker Corporate Edition (a locator system useful in monitoring field personnel) and TextConnect (an SMS advisory service intended for broadcasting important updates and official announcements to employees). The enhanced connectivity and cost-efficient applications provided by GlobeSolutions' comprehensive suite of business communication services are expected to have a positive impact on Century Canning's overall productivity and operations.

Dan David, the head of Globe's corporate business group, likewise thanked their longtime partner for its continued trust and patronage. He stressed the importance of communications technology in handling key areas of business operations, saying: "We firmly believe that business communication applications provide companies with a lot of new opportunities to improve productivity. We are pleased that Century Canning Corp is eager to take advantage of these opportunities in order to encourage the further growth of their business."

Century Canning Corp is the manufacturer of several leading canned food brands in the Philippines, such as Century Tuna, Blue Bay Tuna, 555 Sardines and Argentina Corned Beef. GlobeSolutions head of sales Maridol Ylanan also attended the contract signing and renewal of the partnership, while vice president for finance Oscar Pobre and corporate treasury manager Marcelino Mijares represented Century Canning Corp along with director Po.

For inquiries about GlobeSolutions services, call the GlobeSolutions hotline at 730-1999 or e-mail globesolutions@globetel.com.ph.

Globe Solutions

FROM left: GlobeSolutions head of sales Maridol Ylanan, Globe corporate business group head Dan David, Century Canning Corp director Leo Po, VP for finance Oscar Pobre, and corporate treasury manager Marcelino Mijares sign the partnership agreement.

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PLDT, DTI team up for e-services development in RP

THE PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEphone Co (PLDT) has joined the Department of Trade and Industry in convening the e-Services Philippines 6th Outsourcing Conference and Exhibition to attract investments in the outsourcing business in the country.

As a co-presentor for the event, which will be held on Feb. 16 and 17 at Edsa Shangri-la Manila Hotel, PLDT will help showcase the capabilities of Philippine companies in supporting the burgeoning information technology and business process outsourcing (BPO) industries.

PLDT senior vice president Eric R. Alberto said this event is also a venue for possible local and foreign investors to get a feel of what the country can offer.

"Service providers and suppliers for the IT and BPO industry as well as potential investors will benefit immensely from this event through the insightful presentations and high level discussions. Add to that the interaction and the opportunities to network with many outsourcing experts and you have an exciting event to look forward to," said Alberto.

e-Services Philippines is the country's first and only annual IT/BPO conference and exhibition organized by the Trade and Industry Department through the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem).

The event promotes to both local and global markets the country's world-class capabilities in IT and IT-enabled services, particularly business process outsourcing, wireless applications, data transcription, animation and software development.

There will be two full days of presentations, panel discussions and first-hand learning from industry experts. The CEO Forum on the first day will be a venue for networking between government and industry professionals. There will also be presentations on various e-services sectors that shape the landscape of the IT and BPO industries on the second day.

Rosemarie P. Tingzon-Kwan, Citem division chief, said during a recent visit to PLDT's InnoLab (innovation laboratory), that the country can rightfully boast of world-class facilities that can cater to the IT and BPO industries.

"Facilities such as the InnoLab of PLDT are clearly impressive," she said. "Potential investors should visit facilities such as InnoLab to see for themselves the cutting edge solutions that local service providers can offer."

Kwan visited PLDT's InnoLab recently together with Dondi Mapa, Commission on Information and Communications Technology Commissioner; Grace Baes, Senior Trade and Industry Development Specialist; and Angelo Samson, Industry and Investment Specialist - Japan Desk, Board of Investments.

"Our InnoLab is indeed a perfect venue for government officials and potential clients to see for themselves live demonstrations of cutting edge solutions that the Philippines through PLDT can offer," said PLDT first vice president Nerisse S. Ramos.

"And we are supporting the e-Services Philippines event because we believe that the Philippines is indeed the perfect destination for investments in IT and business process outsourcing," she added.

In 2003, PLDT launched its InnoLab in Manila to undertake research and development in telecommunications technologies together with the academe and government, and provide a venue for demonstrating various equipment and solutions for corporate clientele. PLDT opened its second InnoLab in Cebu in 2004.

stayin_alive@onehundredandfive
2006 San Beda College Alumni Homecoming

SAN BEDA COLLEGE GRAND ALUMNI HOMECOMING

Tanya Garcia and Aubrey Miles lead various guest artists performing in this year's San Beda College Grand Alumni Homecoming dubbed stayin_alive@onehundredandfive on Feb. 18, at the San Beda College Campus in Mendiola, Manila. High School Class '81 (Silver Jubilarians) will host this year's affair in honor of High School Class '56 (Golden Jubilarians) in a star-studded entertainment program by X Zone Entertainment. Signing the contract for the event recently are (from left) lawyer Jojo Sale and Dr. Conrad Oca of San Beda HS '81, and Tanya Garcia and Dondon Monteverde of X Zone Entertainment. All Bedan Alumni (Manila and Alabang) are invited to attend.

Personalized services from TMC

THE HOUSTON MEDICAL GROUP (HMG) now represents the Texas Medical Center (TMC) locally and in Asia. TMC is the world's largest medical complex that includes the St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital (SLEH) and its Five Centers of Excellence: the Texas Heart Institute, the Texas Cancer Institute, the Texas Liver Institute, the Texas Urology Institute and the Texas Lung Institute.

Together with U.S. trained Filipino physicians, HMG has developed a program that will provide patients and their families access to world-class medical services, ensuring confidentiality, customer care, and cultural sensitivity.

HMG provides two services: Virtual Second Opinion and Advanced Medical Treatment.

The Virtual Second Opinion (VSO) service includes sending the patient's records to SLEH for review and evaluation. It allows the patient to receive treatment options without leaving the comforts of home

The Advanced Medical Treatment (AMT) is a full concierge service that includes coordinating the entire process before, during and after your stay in Houston, and securing priority arrangements customized to your needs.

In the Philippines, HMG confirms appointments with the SLEH physician specialists, arranges pre-registration and admission to the hospital, provides cost estimates for treatment and hospital stay, facilitates health insurance coverage, processes travel arrangements, and reserves housing or hotel accommodations.

Upon arrival in Houston, HMG provides airport assistance with Immigration, Baggage Claim, U.S. Customs, and airport transfers. Upon check in, an International Patient Coordinator will handle orientation, assign a nurse liaison, and provide translation assistance in over 20 languages. Business services and 5-star hotel style accommodations at the hospital's Terrace Suites are also available. Upon return to the Philippines, the patient is given post-treatment follow up in coordination with the local physician.

HMG is pleased to announce that leading cancer specialists from the Texas Medical Center Dr. Brian Miles and Dr. Sewa Legha will be returning to Manila on Jan. 29 to Feb. 5 for organized symposia with leading Philippine hospitals, and one-on-one personal consultations.

Dr. Miles is the medical director of the Texas Cancer Institute and a recognized leader in treatment of prostate cancer. Dr. Legha is an oncologist from the Texas Cancer Institute with over 20 years of training at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, specializing in melanomas, breast cancer and rare tumors. They will conduct cancer screening and consultation for breast, lung, gastrointestinal, prostrate and gynecological conditions.

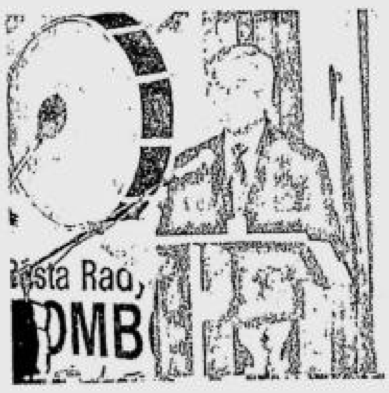
For more information or to schedule a personal consultation, contact Houston Medical Group, at 888-5266, 0917-8813331 or email info@houstonmedgroup.org.

BRASS SCULPTOR HOLDS SOLO EXHIBIT

Renowned brass sculptor Michael Cacnio recently held a solo exhibit featuring his brass sculpture figurine that depicts Filipino culture, customs and family-oriented values. Among Cacnio's guests of honor during the exhibit's formal opening at the Choice Expression Gallery, Bel Air, Makati City were (from left) Cabanatuan City Mayor Jay Vergara and wife Ria, Department of Health Undersecretary Alexander Padilla and Red Espiritu. Also in photo is Cacnio's wife Maria Therese. At the background is a sculpture figurine.

ORETA INDUCTED AS FELLOW OF AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Dr. Jose Oreta Jr. was inducted as Fellow of the American College of Surgeons last Oct. 16, at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, USA. The American College of Surgeons is the biggest and most prestigious organization of surgeons in the USA. Dr. Oreta is a consultant in general surgery at St. Luke's Medical Center, Makati Medical Center, Asian Hospital, Medical City and Philippine Heart Center for Asia. Currently, he is the vice chair of the out-patient department at St. Luke's Medical Center, president of the St. Luke's Medical Center Surgical Alumni Association and secretary of the Philippine Society of Laparoscopic Surgeons.



BOMBO RADYO HOLDS ANNUAL TLMC

Bombo Radyo Philippines, the country's No. 1 Radio Network, started 2006 with a big bang as it held its traditional annual Top level Management conference 2006 at the Legend Villas in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila. Scheduled from Jan. 3 to 8, the strategic planning session was participated by the network's top executives representing the 43-strong Bombo Radyo and Star FM stations nationwide. Leading the conference are the network's senior officers and no less than media magnate and president/CEO, Dr. Rogelio M. Florete, DBM (hc). The theme of the conference is 'Upholding Airwave Supremacy', a testament to the continued dominance of Bombo Radyo and Star FM throughout the country and a challenge for unparalleled excellence to the network's driven men and women.

AMTI HOLDS 1ST INVITATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Accent Micro Technologies Inc (Amti) 1st Invitational Golf Tournament was held at Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club last Nov. 17. Shown are (from left): Fred David (Lina Properties), Nickson Kua (Amti), Wilfred Batara (Design Works), Jojo Paz (FedEx), Jester Intia and Kelvin Inawat (Airfreight 2100), Vov Castro (Amti), Jameson Ngkalon and Tiffany Ngkalon (Charter Chem), Shamaine Ng and Bertrand Ng (Amti), Noel Florends (MFL), Allyxon Cua (Amti), Jon Kaplan (Teledevelopment), Jojit Aguilar (Nestle Phils), Marzo Monseratte (Amti), Ed Favila (MFL), Riderick Legaspi (Nestle Phils), Chito Kintanar (MFL).

DoCoMo to buy 7% of PLDT . . .

From page B2

that it will also increase its stocks to retain control of the country's largest telco.

"First Pacific will not allow the NTT companies to own a bigger chunk of PLDT," said an official of the telco giant.

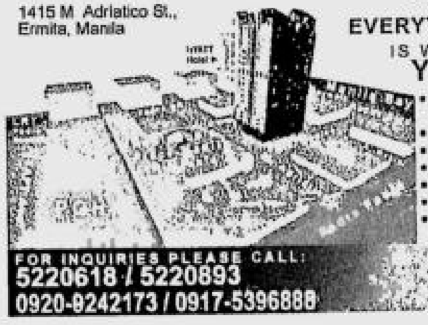
First Pacific owns about 24 percent of PLDT.

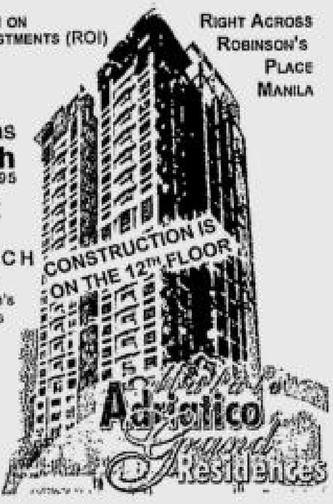
Once on board, NTT DoCoMo will roll out, together with PLDT mobile unit Smart Communications Inc., the patented I-mode service of DoCoMo, turning it into an integral feature of Smart's 3G.

I-mode is NTT DoCoMo's patented mobile Internet platform that allows users access to more than 96,000 Internet sites. I-mode also offers services like e-mail, online shopping and banking, ticket reservations, and restaurant guides.

Mobile phone operators in 15 countries are now using the platform, after entering into licensing agreements with DoCoMo.

PLDT said that I-mode will become "one of Smart's killer applications," once it launches its 3G service.





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Family Business Roundtable

Ateneo de Manila University
John Gokongwei School of Management

CHANGING HANDS:
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LEARN FROM NOTED AUTHOR, PROFESSOR, AND CONSULTANT DENNIS JAFFE AS HE SHARES 35 YEARS' WORTH OF INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCE IN FAMILY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING AT THIS UNIQUE WORKSHOP DESIGNED FOR THE PRESENT AND FUTURE LEADERS OF YOUR BUSINESS.

A unique two-part approach to dealing with family business issues.
Just how does one ensure the continued success of the family business across generations? Into whose hands should you entrust your business? How do you get your parents to begin succession planning? The answers to these questions are critical to the long-term success of any family business. Take advantage of Dr. Dennis Jaffe's presence in Manila and hear his insights into these important questions at Changing Hands, a unique, no-holds barred two-day seminar/workshop that will address the sensitive issues of succession planning from the points of view of both founders and successors.

DAY 1 REACTORS

Dr. Queena Lee-Chua
Associate Professor
Ateneo de Manila, author, and family business consultant

Roberto Aboitiz
Chairman & CEO
Aboitiz Construction Group

Day 1: Designed for Founders and Current Heads of Business
The first day of Changing Hands is specifically designed for founders and current family business heads, addressing the issues important to them: When should I begin succession planning? To what extent should non-family members be considered in the process? How can I select my successor in such a way as to be fair to all my children? How can I make sure my other children accept my choice? How can I name my successor without making myself irrelevant to the business?

Day 2: Tailored for Potential Successors
On the second day, potential family business successors will be put in the spotlight. Among the questions that could be raised: How can I prod my parents to begin succession planning? How do I deal with the succession issue in the absence of a clear succession plan? How should I prepare myself to take over the business? How can I assert my authority over my other siblings? How can I manage disagreements in the absence of a clear head of family?

DAY 2 REACTORS

Mr. Ricardo Mercado
Professorial Lecturer
Ateneo de Manila, and family business consultant

Mrs. Josephine Gotianun-Yap
President
Filinvest Development Corp.

Participants will be given the opportunity to share their own experiences, react to the seminar inputs, and learn from each other at facilitated workshops.

Each session is designed to stand alone, but participants are invited to attend both sessions, for maximum benefit. Don't just work on the issues important to you; hear about the issues that might be important to the person on the other side of the generational gap. Best results can be achieved when both founder and successor attend the entire workshop.

Join us at this first-of-its-kind family business workshop. Changing Hands promises to clear the air for family businesses. Listen to, learn from, and interact with Dennis Jaffe and other family business owners so that together you can strengthen your family enterprises --- on the road to greater success.

Dennis Jaffe, Ph.D.
Dr. Jaffe received his B.A. in Philosophy, M.A. in Management, and Ph.D. in sociology, all from Yale University. He has been helping family businesses to deal with generational transitions, create effective management teams, design family retreats, and build healthy relationships for the past 35 years. An educator, researcher and consultant in the areas of family business and family wealth management, he serves on the boards of several family business organizations, including the Family Firm Institute, and has authored two books dealing with family businesses and their issues.

Seminar Fee
Early Bird Rate: On or Before February 1 — DAY 1: Php 3,150 DAY 2: Php 3,150 BOTH DAYS: Php 5,400
Regular Rate: DAY 1: Php 3,500 DAY 2: Php 3,500 BOTH DAYS: Php 6,000
Group Rate: Register 4 and get 1 additional slot Free!

For inquiries and reservations, call 849-6911

Organized by the Ateneo de Manila's John Gokongwei School of Management, the Family Business Roundtable serves as a venue for business leaders and entrepreneurs to share experiences and best practices, and learn from each other's successes and failures. A model for partnership between management educator and business practitioner, it successfully blends theory and practice to offer a well-balanced program for the continued professional growth of the leaders of the Philippine business community.

Sponsored by: BCD•PINPOINT

John Gokongwei School of Management Building, Ateneo de Manila University February 17 & 18, Friday and Saturday. 8am 5pm

Faeldon captured but website still operational

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

THE CAPTURE OF CAPT. NICANOR FAELDON, one of the ringleaders of the so-called Oakwood mutiny of July 2003, apparently has failed to stop his supporters from updating his website.

Hours after his capture, a message was posted on the main page of Faeldon's website, www.pilipino.org.ph. There is also a new statement posted in one of the sub-pages of the website.

This confirms that Faeldon is not the only one updating his website, which was constantly updated for a month since he escaped.

Faeldon was one of five military mutineers who escaped from detention at the Fort Bonifacio headquarters of the Philippine Army in Makati City in recent weeks. He escaped from his guards on Dec. 14 after a postponed hearing at the old Makati City Justice Hall. The four other fugitive mutineers escaped from Fort Bonifacio on Jan. 17.

The first message, posted at 1:22 a.m. of Jan. 28, declared that Faeldon's cause will not be in vain and that his fight would continue even after his capture.

The message also belied the military's statements that the female companion of Faeldon, identified as Captain Rivas, was his girlfriend, but was rather one of the officers Faeldon was contacting.

The second message, posted by someone calling himself "J," was a full statement emphasizing four principles that the current administration should adhere to. These are sacrifice, courage, action and leadership by example.

A postscript in the second message noted that Faeldon planned to hold a press conference before he was captured.

Faeldon's website is being hosted by the "Network of Known Internet Addicts Hosting Sol," a hosting facility based in General Santos City.

NTC, police to crack down on shops selling stolen phones

By Erwin Lemuel Oliva
Contributor

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) and the Philippine National Police will start cracking down on mobile phone retail shops, dealers and repair shops selling stolen handsets this month, NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento told Infotech.

The NTC and the PNP are set to sign an agreement toward closer coordination between them, to go after violators of Philippine anti-fencing laws with the sale of stolen handsets as "second-hand" units, Sarmiento added.

"The NTC met with PNP station commanders to discuss ways how we can help each other run after people, dealers, resellers, and repair shops buying and selling stolen or snatched cell phones. A memorandum of agreement will be signed in two weeks between the two agencies that would signal the start of a nationwide crackdown," the NTC official said.

Local authorities recently raided retail shops in a popular mall in Greenhills, San Juan, after they traced the stolen handsets of two local television reporters. A relative of Rep. Francis Escudero was also killed on Jan. 19, 2006 during a cell phone-snatching incident.

The NTC last year required cell phone dealers, retail and repair shops to register with the NTC, following the growing problem of cell phone theft in the Philippines.

The same NTC rules now require cell phone dealers and retail shops to submit the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) of each unit sold in the Philippines.

The IMEI is a unique number given to every single mobile phone, typically found on the battery's back. IMEI numbers of cell phones connected to a GSM network are stored in a database containing all valid mobile phone equipment. When a phone is reported stolen or is not type approved, the number is marked invalid and the handset is blocked from a network. However, special software now allows tech-savvy people to tamper with a handset's IMEI—an act, the NTC rules say, is now illegal.

The NTC has been implementing a "blacklisting" system where stolen mobile phones are blocked on the basis of the 15-digit IMEI code.

Until a formal agreement is inked between the agency and the local police, Sarmiento warns local shops to comply with NTC rules.

"We'll start cracking down on those who have not registered with us in the meantime. After we sign the MOA, we'll go nationwide," the NTC official added.

He added that the NTC has been conducting an information drive since September 2005 in malls in Metro Manila, giving local shops and cell phone dealers a fair warning.

"With the recent developments, we're now asking the PNP to coordinate with us, and assist us in our crackdown," he added.

No link between cell phone, cancer

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

FILIPINO MOBILE PHONE USERS CAN REST easy knowing that their phones are not frying their brains.

A combined study by several British medical institutes have concluded that mobile phone use does not cause glioma, a common type of brain cancer once thought to be aggravated by extensive use of mobile phones.

Tests conducted on healthy mobile phone users with different phone use patterns showed that glioma did not develop even in heavy users of mobile phones.

The study was prompted by reports that glioma patients had an increased growth of their tumors on the side of their heads they most often used for their phones.

The study was undertaken by the Universities of Leeds, Nottingham and Manchester. The London Institute of Cancer Research, another study participant, posted the results on its website (http://www.icr.ac.uk/MobilePhoneGlioma.htm).

The group took four years to extensively examine the possible correlation between glioma and mobile phone use. The British report also concurs with another study by the Swedish Interphone Study group formed by the Swedish Institute of Environmental Medicine and the Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

No Philippine studies have been conducted on whether extended mobile phone use could cause brain cancer, male sterility, or finger muscle failure due to frequent text messaging.

Videocon bridges religious differences

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

SEVERAL ORGANIZATIONS ATTEMPTED TO resolve religious issues between Muslims and Christians using a most unconventional mode—video conferencing.

De La Salle University, Synectix Inc., the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Assisi Development Foundation and the office of Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. are conducting a video conferencing dialogue to promote peace-building in Mindanao.

Called the "Ugnay Kabataan," the project was held simultaneously at the DLSU William Shaw Little Theater and the St. Joseph Retreat House in Cotabato City from January 23 to 24. It was attended by nearly 400 high school and college students from Metro Manila and Cotabato City.

Alfred Antonio, coordinator of the DLSU Center for Social Concern and Action Religious Studies, said in an interview that the event was the first attempt to have youth in Manila and Mindanao to talk on various issues dividing their communities.

Among the subjects discussed at the first day of the conference were prejudices and impressions of both groups. According to the Manila students, their impression was that Mindanao was always on the verge of war while the Mindanao delegates always thought Manileños to be indifferent to their plight.

Both groups agreed to come up with an action plan to continue the dialogue after the conference and pursue projects that would try to resolve common problems.

"It was agreed upon that the students should help improve the identity problem of both sides. They talked more on peace building," Antonio said.

Cybersecurity tips

By Jerry Liao

POWERTIPS

1. DISCONNECT FROM THE INTERNET when idle or not in use.
2. Never accept attachments from strangers.
3. Use anti-virus, anti-spam software and keep it up to date.
4. Back up your files regularly.
5. Change passwords at least every sixty (60) days.

For more tips, visit www.brainshare.com.ph. Everyone is invited to attend the Powertips 2006 "Security Secrets and Strategies" conference on March 16, 2006 at the Grand Ballroom of Dusit Hotel Nikko. Tickets are available at all SM TicketNet outlets or call 911-5555. You can also register online at www.infochat.com.ph/. For your comments, questions and suggestions, send e-mail to techtvhost@yahoo.com.

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Petron sees bright prospects

EXPECTING LARGE YIELDS FROM ITS EXport business and refinery investments, industry leader Petron Corp. sees a better performance this year compared with 2005.

While declining to reveal the company's profit target for the year, Petron president and chief executive Khalid Al-Faddagh said that 2006 will definitely be better than last year.

"We're always looking for improvement, looking for growth," Al-Faddagh told reporters. "I think growth will continue for now in various aspects of our business."

He said part of the growth would come from the company's non-fuel business, particularly its company-owned, company-operated stations. Petron would be adding more stations to its nationwide network of 1,200 stations.

Petron's non-fuel revenues come from concession fees being paid by concessionaires at stations that have room for restaurants and other establishments. These stations are usually located along the expressways.

The company will be investing $300 million in three years to bankroll additional refinery units.

As of the third quarter of last year, Petron already exceeded its P3.6-billion net income target for 2005. It posted January-September profits of close to P4.8 billion.

Good international prices and rising export volumes enabled the oil firm to chalk up a net income of almost P2.5 billion in the third quarter alone, even surpassing its first half profits of P2.3 billion.

Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

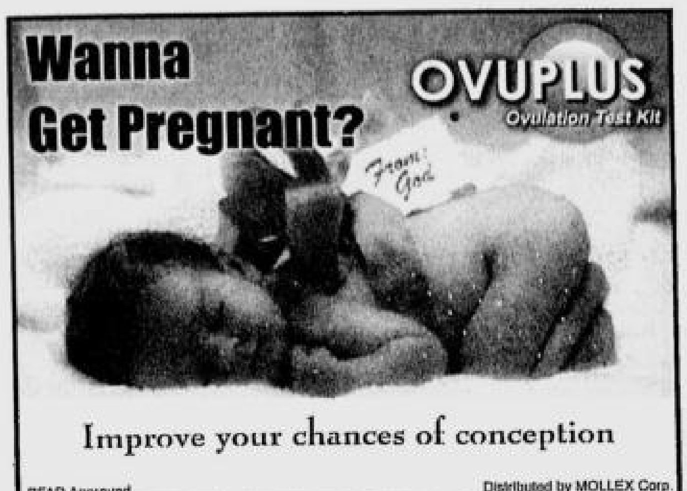
(As of Jan. 27, 2006)

Stocks	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36	36.5	35.5	36.5	286,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.5	59	58.5	58.5	2,213,200
China Banking Corp.	605	605	605	605	660
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	600
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	60	61	60	61	169,600
International Exch. Bank	20.5	20.5	20.25	20.25	32,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	29.5	30	29.5	30	683,300
Philippine National Bank	32	32	32	32	13,500
Phil. Savings Bank	34	35	34	35	3,200
Security Bank Corp.	37.5	38.5	37.5	38.5	156,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	9,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Manulife Financial Corp.	3150	3150	3130	3140	790
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	76,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	145	145	145	145	5,500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2100	2100	2100	20
Ivantage Corp.	0.64	0.66	0.64	0.64	5,480,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	49	49	47.5	49	2,272,200
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	14	13.75	14	3,700
Manila Electric Co. B	22	22	21.75	22	97,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	2,480,000
Petron Corp.	4.8	4.85	4.75	4.75	2,049,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	1,200,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	37,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	37.5	37.5	35.5	36.5	841,500
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.56	1.5	1.56	176,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	63.5	62.5	63.5	105,200
San Miguel Corp. B	86.5	86.5	85.5	86	202,000
Universal Robina Corp	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	7,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	700,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.34	4,000,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.22	1.26	1.18	1.2	9,209,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.45	4.45	4.45	4.45	495,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	8,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	600,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	30,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	500,000
Ayala Corp.	330	332.5	327.5	327.5	194,250
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	40,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.85	4.85	4.75	4.75	122,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	5,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.22	2.22	2.22	2.22	111,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	5,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.91	0.87	0.89	1,750,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	89,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.86	1.08	0.86	0.92	570,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.8	31,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.08	10,679,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	321,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	465,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.22	1.24	292,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	1,307,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.21	0.25	0.21	0.25	150,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	12,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.28	16,320,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	23,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	1,190,000
SM Investments Corp.	230	231	226	229	162,950
South China Resources Inc.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.62	230,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	230,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.5	5,387,300
Belle Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	1,136,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	1,410,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.6	1.62	2,290,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	60,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.225	0.235	0.225	0.235	500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.49	18,210,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	290,000
Filinvest Land Inc	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.54	8,333,000
Interport Res. B	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	8,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	1,620,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	300,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.46	15,890,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	15,160,000
SM Development Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	3,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.7	2,764,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	1,450,000
SERVICE					
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.91	0.92	0.9	0.92	720,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	750	755	750	755	84,440
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.35	2,787,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1850	1850	1845	1850	72,180
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.175	0.185	0.175	0.18	10,670,000
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	7,600,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	8,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.06	8,400,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	15,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.033	0.031	0.033	1,249,400,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.9	1.92	1.9	1.92	515,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	12.25	12.5	12	12	2,182,400
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	200,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.7	3,122,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1,200,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	65,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	933,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.14	100,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.62	1.62	1.56	1.56	630,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.007	70,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.9	6	5.8	5.8	455,000
Benguet Corp. A	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	7,000
Benguet Corp. B	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	5,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.235	0.225	0.225	9,430,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	13,530,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	2,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	8,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	20,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	1,003,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.24	2.24	2.14	2.16	11,880,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26	26	26	26	262,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.195	0.205	0.195	0.205	830,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	235,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	147,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	70,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	100,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4	4	4	4	14,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series I	10	10	10	10	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series K	10	10	10	10	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series L	10	10	10	10	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.6	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000

CURRENCIES

January 29, 2006

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.818800	1.000000	52.4310
Japan	Yen	0.007036	0.008593	0.4505
United Kingdom	Pound	1.458200	1.780900	93.3744
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105569	0.128931	6.7600
Switzerland	Franc	0.645029	0.787774	41.3038
Canada	Dollar	0.712309	0.869943	45.6120
Singapore	Dollar	0.503474	0.614893	32.2395
Australia	Dollar	0.617031	0.753580	39.5110
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.172459	2.653224	139.1112
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218347	0.266667	13.9816
Brunei	Dollar	0.501931	0.613008	32.1406
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000088	0.000107	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021055	0.025714	1.3482
UAE	Dirham	0.222936	0.272272	14.2755
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.221300	64.0340
Argentina	Peso	0.268283	0.327654	17.1792
India	Rupee	0.018605	0.022722	1.1913
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218667	0.267058	14.0021
Mexico	New Peso	0.078029	0.095297	4.9965
South Africa	Rand	0.135036	0.164919	8.6469
Korea	Won	0.000845	0.001032	0.0541
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025651	0.031327	1.6425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Alta Vista B*Corp.*	-	300,000/300,000*
Baguio Country Club	-	600,000
Calatagan Golf	Pls. Call	40,000
Camp John Hay	-	Pls. Call
Canlubang Golf	530,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	70,000	
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,300,000
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100,000
City Sports Club Cebu	-	180,000
Club Filipino	120,000	
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	180,000	100,000/200,000*/250,000**
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	50,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	250,000	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	120,000/200,000*	150,000*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	270,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Southwoods A/B*	350,000/Pls. Call*	300,000
Makati Sports Club	200,000	165,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	250,000	250,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	120,000/150,000*	90,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	150,000
Mt. Malarayat A	230,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/400,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	130,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/230,000**	120,000*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	180,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	80,000*
Spa & Lodge	520,000	
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	1,100,000/1,500,000*
The Palms Country Club	Pls. Call	360,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	730,000	680,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	600,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club	140,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	100,000
Valle Verde Ind.	190,000	
Wack Wack Golf	6,350,000	6,000,000*

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Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,175,000	1,000,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,050,000
Anvaya Cove Beach & Nature Club	Please Call	
Baguio Country Club	550,000	500,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	40,000	20,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	120,000	60,000
Camp John Hay	190,000	165,000
Canlubang	550,000	500,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	-	1,300,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	-
Club Filipino	140,000	100,000
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	90,000
Forest Hills "B"	200,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	165,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	Please Call
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,000,000
Manila Polo	2,250,000	2,200,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	310,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	Please Call	700,000
Manila Yacht Club	400,000	-
Metroclub "A"	120,000	90,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	450,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	250,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	140,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	400,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	125,000
Rockwell	Please Call	-
Spa & Lodge	500,000	-
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	1,100,000
Sta. Elena "B"	-	1,500,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	310,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	650,000
Tagaytay Midlands	730,000	630,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	85,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	-
Valley Golf	220,000	190,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,350,000	6,000,000

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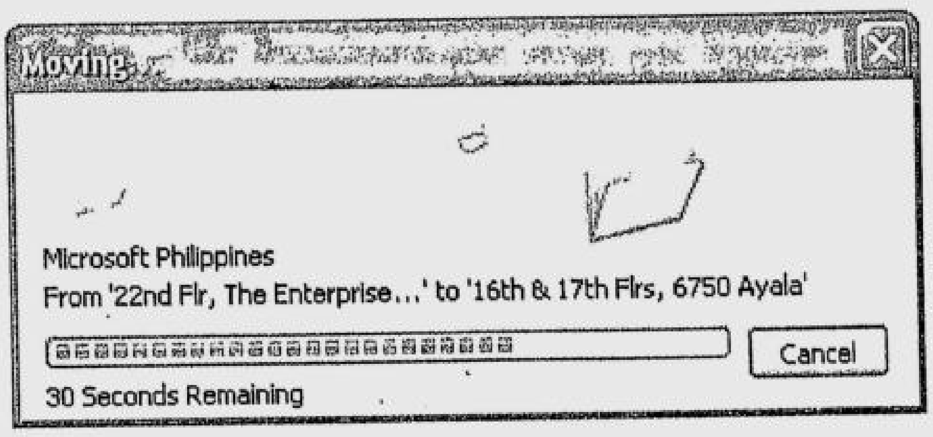
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** *Deadline for submission of application is on February 17, 2006*
** *Academic Year 2006 starts on April 1, 2006*

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late LEONCIA SANTOS has been extrajudicially settled among her heirs before Notary Public PANCHO G. UMALI of Makati City as per Doc. No.106, Page No.23, Book No.V, Series of 2005.
(PDI-Jan. 23, 30 & Feb. 6, 2006)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ENCARNACION D. VARONA was extrajudicially settled among heirs with quit claim/waiver of rights as per Doc. No. 123 Page No. 29 Book I Series of 2006 before Notary Public Erlinda C. Reyes of Antipolo City.
PDI-Jan.28, 30 & Feb.6, 2006

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48th TESDA Board Meeting
10 November 2005, Thursday, 1:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig, Metro Manila

Resolution No. 2005 – 19

Approving and Promulgating the Training Regulations for PC Operations NCII, Animation NCIII, Programming NCIV

WHEREAS, during the 42nd Executive Committee-TESDA Board Meeting held on 16 May 2005, the EXCOM-TESDA Board endorsed favorably the prioritization of the thirty-five (35) qualifications recommended during the Standards Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting which included the Information and Communication Technology PC Operations (IT User) NCII, Animation NCIII, and Programming NCIV;

WHEREAS, during the 46th TESDA Board Meeting held last 19 May 2005 TESDA Board Resolution No. 2005-09 "Prioritization of the Thirty Five (35) Qualifications for the Development of Training Regulations for Year 2005" was approved and adopted;

WHEREAS, during the 47th TESDA Board Meeting held last 4 August 2005 the Board approved TESDA Board Resolution No. 2005-14 "Prioritization of additional four (4) Qualifications for the Development of Training Regulations for Year 2005 (Masonry NCI, Jewelry Making NCII, Fish Capture NCII and Agri-Crops Production NCII)";

WHEREAS, the Board approved a total of thirty nine (39) priority qualifications under the Philippine TVET Qualifications Framework (PTQF) and hereby directed the TESDA Secretariat to undertake the development of training regulations;

WHEREAS, in the 10th and 11th Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD)-TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation meetings held last 18 July 2005, and 23 July 2005, respectively, the Training Regulations formulated for PC Operations NCII (IT User), Animation NCIII, and Programming NCIV were presented and deliberated.

WHEREAS, the Training Regulations for PC Operations (IT User) NCII, Animation NCIII, and Programming NCIV were presented to the 12th Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) Meeting held last 06 September 2005 and endorsed favorably to the 44th EXCOM-TESDA Board Meeting held on 27 October 2005 for TESDA Board consideration and approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves and promulgates the Training Regulations for PC Operations NCII, Animation NCIII, and Programming NCIV;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of the Resolution and Training Regulations (TR) be published and disseminated to all concerned and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All training programs under these training regulations must comply with the requirements of the abovementioned TRs. Graduates of TVET courses covered by the abovementioned training regulations shall be required to undergo mandatory assessment under the national assessment and certification system.

Adopted this 10th day of November 2005.

(Sgd.) **MR. ELMER K. TALAVERA**
Executive Director, Planning Office
Officer-In-Charge, TESDA Board Secretariat

Attested by:

(Sgd.) **SECRETARY AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Director General, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(Sgd.) **SECRETARY PATRICIA A. STO. TOMAS**
Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
Chair, TESDA Board

(PDI–January 29 & 30, 2006)

Pag-IBIG Fund, Makati I Branch
The Atrium of Makati
Makati Avenue, City of Makati

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF MODULAR FURNITURE AND WORKSTATION AT PAG-IBIG FUND MAKATI BRANCH OFFICES

The Pag-IBIG Fund, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Makati I Branch (BAC) intends to apply the sum of P 14,237,299.00 being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the supply, delivery and installation of Modular Furniture and Workstation at Pag-IBIG Fund Makati Branch Offices. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Pag-IBIG Fund now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the supply, delivery and installation of modular furniture and workstation at Pag-IBIG Fund Makati Branch Offices. Bidders must be duly registered with proper authorities and must possess necessary licenses and permits applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before 5:00 p.m. of February 17, 2006 to the BAC Makati I Branch Secretariat at Room 709, 7/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City and secure the Eligibility and Bid Documents therefrom. The BAC Makati I Branch Secretariat will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility and Bid Forms, upon their submission of the LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) to the Pag-IBIG Fund Cashier. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility and Bid documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: at 1:00 p.m. of February 20, 2006 at Room 709, 7/F, Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to Bid for the project. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A or R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Pag-IBIG Fund Makati Branch at Room 709 at Telephone Nos. 8114181 and 8114275 and inspect the Bidding Documents from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on January 31, 2006.

The Pag-IBIG Fund will hold a Pre-Bid Conference at 1:00 p.m. on February 08, 2006 at the following address: Room 602, 6/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

Prospective Bidders must submit their Bids at Room 709, 7/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City on or before Feb. 20, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on the same date and time at Room 602, 6/F Atrium of Makati Condominium Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

The Pag-IBIG Fund reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) SEVERA ASTORGA BUQUID
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee-Makati Branch

(PDI – January 23 & 30, 2006)

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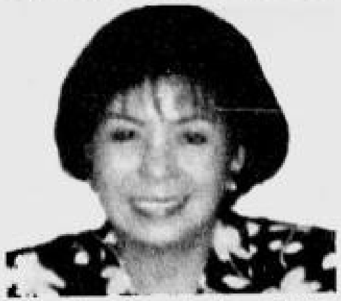

Notice is hereby given to the public that a Bench Warrant has been issued by the Municipal Trial Court in Cities, Third Judicial Region, Branch 1, Tarlac City against **ADELINA PALISOC** whose picture appears above in connection with the Criminal Case Nos. 666-04 to 668-04 for Violation of B.P. 22. Any information leading to the lawful arrest of **ADELINA PALISOC** please contact Lamorena Law Office, F. Tañedo Street, Tarlac City.

Tel. No. **(045) 982-4198**.

(PDI--Jan. 30, 2006)

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A.M. Best affirms rating of Malayan Insurance Company

A.M. BEST CO. HAS AFFIRMED THE financial strength rating (FSR) of B++ (Very Good) and assigned an issuer credit rating (ICR) of "bbb" to Malayan Insurance Company, Inc. (MICO) (Philippines). The outlook on both ratings is stable.

The ratings reflect MICO's consistent market leadership, strong risk-adjusted capitalization and stable stream of investment income. The ratings continue to recognize the company's extensive reinsurance arrangements.

MICO has established a solid position within the Philippines' non-life insurance market as a result of its 75 years of operating history. The company has maintained its market leadership in terms of gross premiums written for the last 35 years. Gross premiums grew by 20% to P3.9 billion ($70 million) in 2004 from P3.3 billion ($59 million) in 2003. MICO is the flagship insurance company of Yuchengco Group of Companies (YGC), which is a financial conglomerate in the Philippines.

Aside from maintaining its no.1 position for gross premiums written, Malayan also emerged as the leading company in terms of premiums earned and paid up capital. It bested other non-life insurance companies when it generated P1.63 billion ($29.20 million) in premiums earned in 2004, a 52 percent increase over 2003's figure of P1.07 billion ($19.16 million).

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(For Customer Service Representative applicants, please look for Lynn Marcelo)

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Center for Health Development – Bicol

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER**, through General Appropriations Act of 2006 intends to apply specified sums for the following projects:
   a. **Project: Procurement of Various Medical Equipment – (IAEB No. 2006-01) Approved Budget for the Contract: TWENTY TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THIRTY TWO THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SIXTY FOUR & 05/100 Philippine Pesos (Php 22,532,164.05)**

Sale of Bid Documents	January 30, 2006 to March 2, 2006
Pre-Bid Conference	March 2, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
Bid Opening	March 14, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library

   b **Project: Procurement of Various Pharmaceuticals – (IAEB No. 2006-02) Approved Budget for the Contract: FORTY THREE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY FOUR THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED THIRTY SIX & 40/100 Philippine Pesos (Php 43,774,236.40)**

Sale of Bid Documents	January 30, 2006 to March 3, 2006
Pre-Bid Conference	March 3, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library
Bid Opening	March 15, 2006 – 9:00 A.M. BMC Library

   Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the above stated projects. Delivery of Goods required as stated in the Special Conditions of the Contract for each project.
   The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00A.M. to 12:00Noon; 1:00P.M. to 5:00P.M., except weekends and Holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents for each project may be purchased by Interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **TWO THOUSAND Philippine Pesos (PhP2,000.00)**. The method of payment will be in the form of Cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address, date and time stated above. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the following forms, in the amount at least equal to and not lower than a percentage of the ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency:
   1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)
   2. Bank Guarantee (1.5% of ABC)
   3. Surety Bond (2.5% of ABC)

   Late bids shall not be accepted.
7. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representative/s who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The **BICOL MEDICAL CENTER** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Contact Address: BICOL MEDICAL CENTER
Concepcion Pequeña, Naga City
Telephone Nos. (054) 473-7578; (054) 473-8936
E-mail Address: slopez_bmc@yahoo.com
Fax No. (054) 473-8936; (054)811-2227
Website: http://www.doh.gov.ph//bmc/index.htm

Contact Person: ANGELITA A. AGAWA, MPA
Chief Administrative Officer and BAC Chairman

(Sgd.) ANGELITA A. AGAWA, MPA
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Jan. 30 & Feb. 5, 2006)

SALES ENGINEER

1) BS Civil Eng'g., Arch't Graduate or any other related courses.
2) Experience in selling construction materials an advantage but not necessary.

2 FIELD INSPECTOR ENGINEERS

1) Male, Graduate or undergraduate in Civil Eng'r. or Arch't course.
2) With technical know-how in Actual Measurement.
3) Must know how to drive motorcycle, and with valid driver's license.
4) Not over 27 years of age.

1 MECHANICAL UNDERGRADUATE

1) Undergraduate of mechanical eng'g. course.
2) With experience in mechanical works.
3) Not over 27 years of age.

CALL: 895-18-30 / 896-74-35

National Irrigation Administration
Region VI, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

Contract Ref. No.
NIAR6-SPISP-GS-01-06

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Region VI, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for Eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Supply and Delivery of Various IT Equipment and Software for SPISP CPMO
Location : NIA, Region VI, Iloilo City
Brief Description : (Actual breakdown of items to be bid are indicated in the Bid Form)

1. 8 – units Computer Notebook
2. 7 – units Printer
3. 7 – units 4 in 1 USB Flash Driver Portable Storage Device
4. 5 – units Desktop
5. 1 – unit Flatbed Scanner
6. 1 – unit Voice Recorder (Portable Multi Media Player)
7. 29 – units USB Mobile Disk (512 MB Memory Flash Drive)
8. Others (see list)

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : Php 1,354,100.00
Contract Duration : 60 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

BAC Activities	*Schedule*		
	Time	DATE	VENUE
1. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility and Issuance of Eligibility Forms		Jan. 23, 2006	NIA Reg. 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
2. Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Requirements		Feb. 6, 2006	
3. Issuance of Bid Documents		Feb. 20, 2006	NIA Reg. 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
4. Pre-Bid Conference	10:15 A.M.	Feb 27, 2006	NIA Reg. 6, Conference Room, Iloilo City
5. Submission and Opening of Bids	10:15 A.M.	Mar. 13, 2006	– do –
6. Notice of Award		Mar. 29, 2006	

Cost of Eligibility Forms = Php 500.00 (non-refundable / non-transferable)

Bid Documents will be available only to eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00) to the National Irrigation Administration Region VI Cashier.

The National Irrigation Administration assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The NIA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved:
(Sgd.) ELISEO R. CARREON, CSEE
BAC Chairman

(PDI – January 23 & 30, 2006)

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— 2 Corinthians 5:8

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Lt. Col. (Ret.)
CONSTANTINO P. AGDAMAG

of Vigan, Ilocos Sur

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on January 26, 2006 at the age of 82.

His loving wife **Dolly**; children **Arthur & Denden, Allan, Anna May, Karen & Joe, Mayette**; brother **Priscillo**; grandchildren **Nicole, Lorenz, Paul, Ashley, Justin, Danielle, Alyssa, Patricia & Joey**, and other relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park), Parañaque City.

Interment will be on February 3, 2006, Friday after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Manila Memorial Park.

LOLITA G. BASADA

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 28, 2006 at the age of 80.

Her bereaved daughter Marlette; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Garden of Memories Memorial Chapels, Bagong Calzada, Pateros, Metro Manila.

Interment will be announced later.

TEODORO GUMATAY GENER

Born on 18 October 1927
*Has peacefully joined the loving Father and his daughter **Theresa** on 28 January 2006.*

His bereaved wife, **Candida Dimaano-Gener**; children, **Eduardo, Ramon, Ma. Dorina & Harry Portillo, Teodoro Jr., Cynthia, Gerardo & Noreen Mendoza**, and **Yolanda**; grandchildren, **Jonathan, Jojo, Erika, Emiko & John, Via & Charles, Bea & Paolo, Alvin, Kevin, Anna & Kristine, Coby**, and **Joseph**; brothers, sisters, brothers- & sisters-in-law, and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Mt. Carmel Church, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced at the wake.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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BUSINESS

BOI eases rules on auto export program

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS said it had changed the implementing rules of the Automotive Export Program to boost the development of the local auto industry.

According to a BOI notice, the amendment to the guidelines governing Executive Order No. 312 of 2004 is aimed at encouraging more investments in the sector through more flexible requirements that would allow exporters to take advantage of perks assigned to different export categories.

EO 312 provides incentives for exports of completely built units in four categories:

- Regular CBU exports where participants in the program must directly export 10,000 units a year at a minimum freight-on-board value of $5,000 per unit;
- developmental CBU export, which means the vehicles are new models designed to be produced mainly in the country. Minimum volume should be 5,000 a year worth at least $5,000 per unit;
- niche CBU exports, where vehicles are exclusively made in the country, with yearly exports of at least 2,500 units at $10,000 each, and
- high-value, low-volume CBU exports where exporters must ship out yearly at least 2,500 units of high-end vehicles at a minimum value of $20,000 a unit.

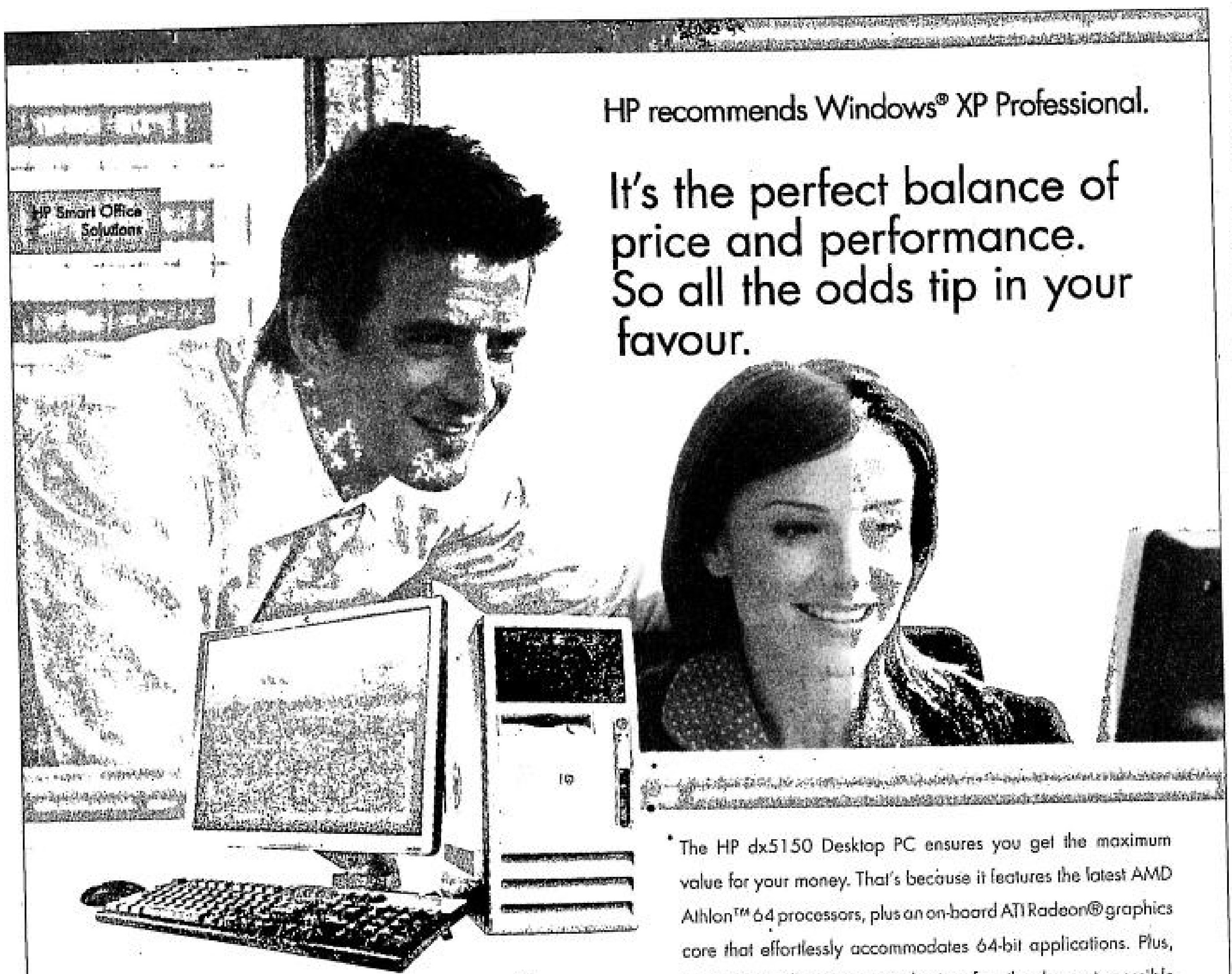
In particular, the revisions allowed a program participant to qualify for net foreign exchange earnings credit as well as other incentives if it met the combined minimum of either the number of units to be exported or the value of shipments in two categories.

The NFEE credit, given out in dollar values, is used to get discounts in the shipment of vehicles imported by the participant.

Under EO 312, the NFEE credit amount to $400 per unit for the first two years and $300, $200, and $100 for the next three years.

Under the amended rules, a program participant that opted for a combination of regular and niche CBU exports could qualify for perks if it exported a total of 12,500 units.

In this case, the minimum value per vehicle requirement will no longer be imposed.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₱41,140 | HP dx5150 MICROTOWER DESKTOP PC

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- 256MB PC3200 DDR400 DIMM
- 80GB SATA 1.5Gb/s Hard Drive
- HP PS/2 Scroll Mouse - Carbonite
- 52X CD-ROM Drive
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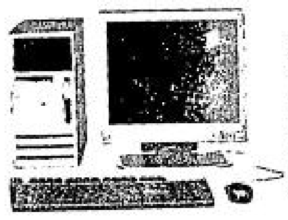

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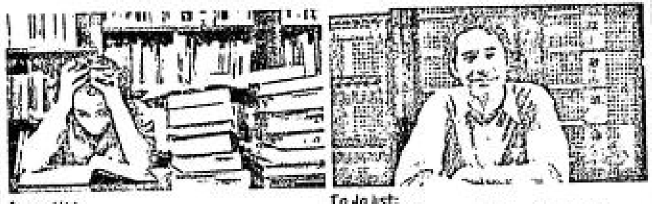

To do list:
- buy branded server
- buy books on Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP, SMTP, VoIP
- install operating system (good luck!)
- download security patches & recompile kernel (yikes!)
- install applications (and pray)
- search Google for help on what went wrong
- call for tech support of your supplier (in India)

To do list:
- buy NetMachine pre-installed with Linux and applications (web, mail, bandwidth manager, Asterisk)
- call our Microsoft, Cisco and Red Hat Certified engineers for further assistance
- take a vacation! :)

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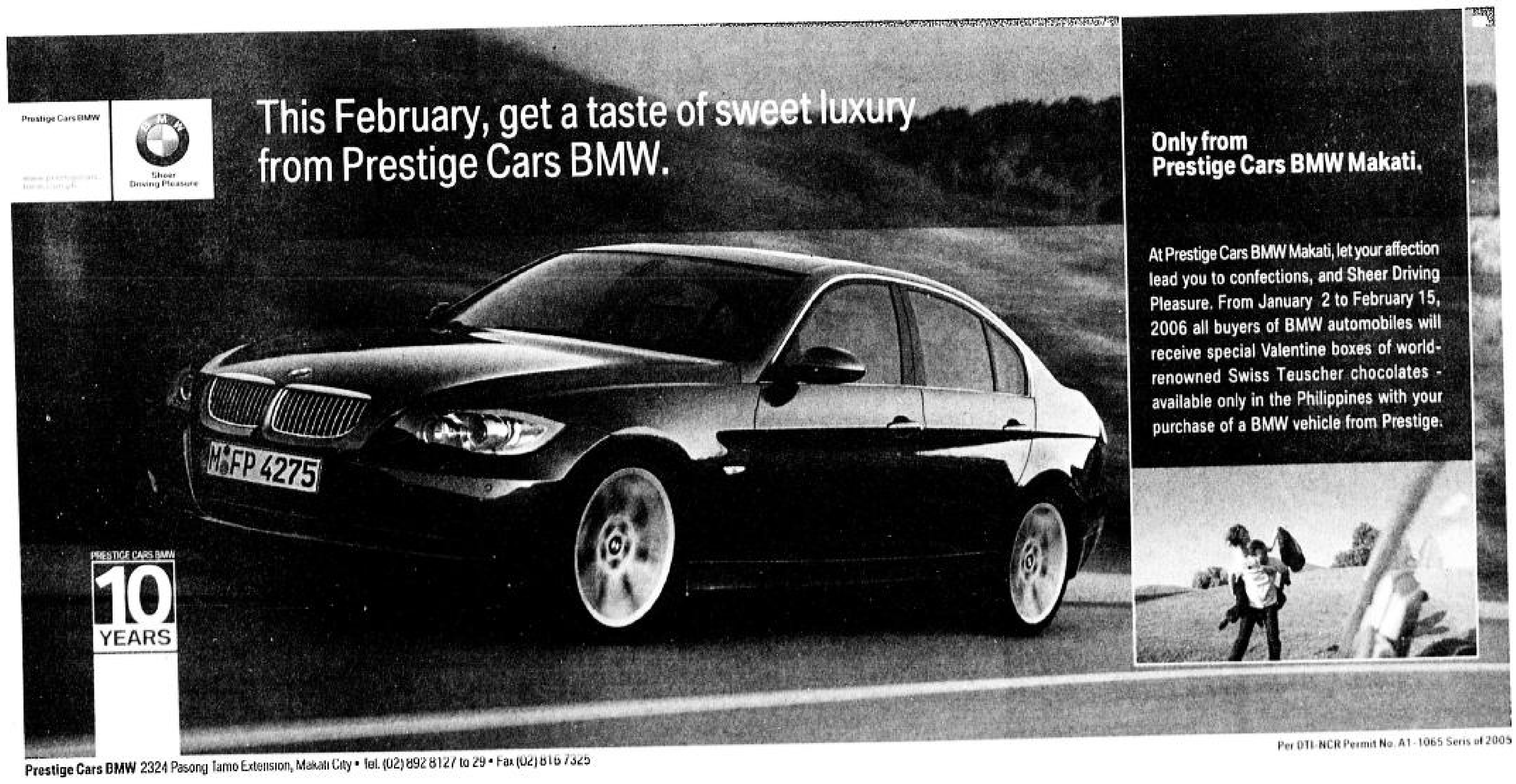
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BUSINESS*Monday*

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor
Margie Quimpo-Espino

GLORIETTA ACTIVITY CENTER
JANUARY 29 & 30

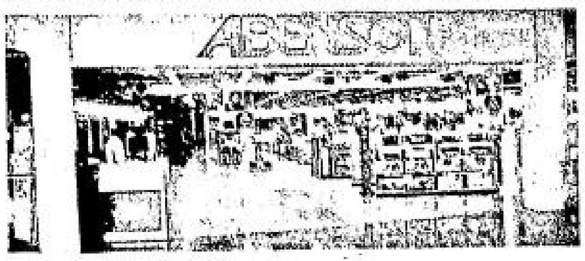
Wedding March

'I KNOW WHAT YOU BOUGHT LAST YEAR'

Compiled by Margie Quimpo- Espino and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ALL SURVEYS SHOW THE FILIPINO IS WORSE OFF, ECOnomically. But check out what they bought last year and you will see a different picture.

BusinessMonday asked various retailers to list down their top 10 best selling items for 2005. Here's a look at what Pinoys spent their hard earned money on in 2005.



Abenson appliances

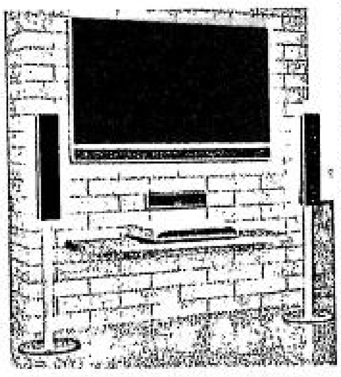
WINSTON LIM OF ABENSON says "the basic categories still sell well." And by basic he means television sets and refrigerators.

But as he states "there were a few things that surprised us."

These were:

1. 21" flat TV– all brands
2. Refrigerators– small sizes
3. Projection TVs
4. Plasma and LCD TVs
5. MP3 players– Apple ipods and Creative MP3s
6. Digital cameras– Canon and Sony brands
7. Nokia phones
8. Oregon Scientific Philippe Starck clocks and pedometers
9. DVD players– Philips and Pioneer brands
10. Small appliances– toaster and coffee makers

SM Appliances



1. Plasma TVs
2. LCD TCVs
3. DVD players
4. Washing machines
5. Refrigerators
6. MP3 players
7. Digital cameras, moving cameras
9. Airconditioners
10. Electric fans

SM Department Store

YOU SEE FILIPINOS TOTING BLUE SM plastic bags everywhere but have you ever wondered what's inside them? The country's biggest "sari-sari store and palengke" gave BusinessMonday a rare peek into the top 10 products that kept its cash registers ringing for the whole of 2005.

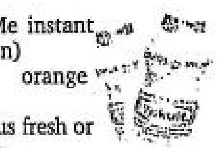
Top 10 items sold in 24 SM Department Stores nationwide in 2005:

1. Lee bottoms
2. Polo shirts
3. Converse rubber shoes
4. White T-shirt from Surplus Shop
5. Mario d' Boro leatherette pumps
6. Molecules tops (boys)
7. Gibi laced up loafers and slip ons
8. Islander Blue sandals
9. Bikini panties (six in one pack)
10. Rusty Lopez laced up loafers

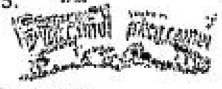
SM grocery stores

TOP 10 ITEMS SOLD IN 27 SM GROcery stores nationwide in 2005

SM senior vice president Jojo Mendiola said SM continued to be the first choice of Filipinos when buying food, apparel and shoes. "We offer value for money in a clean and comfortable setting," said Mendiola. "Value for money has always been our proposition."



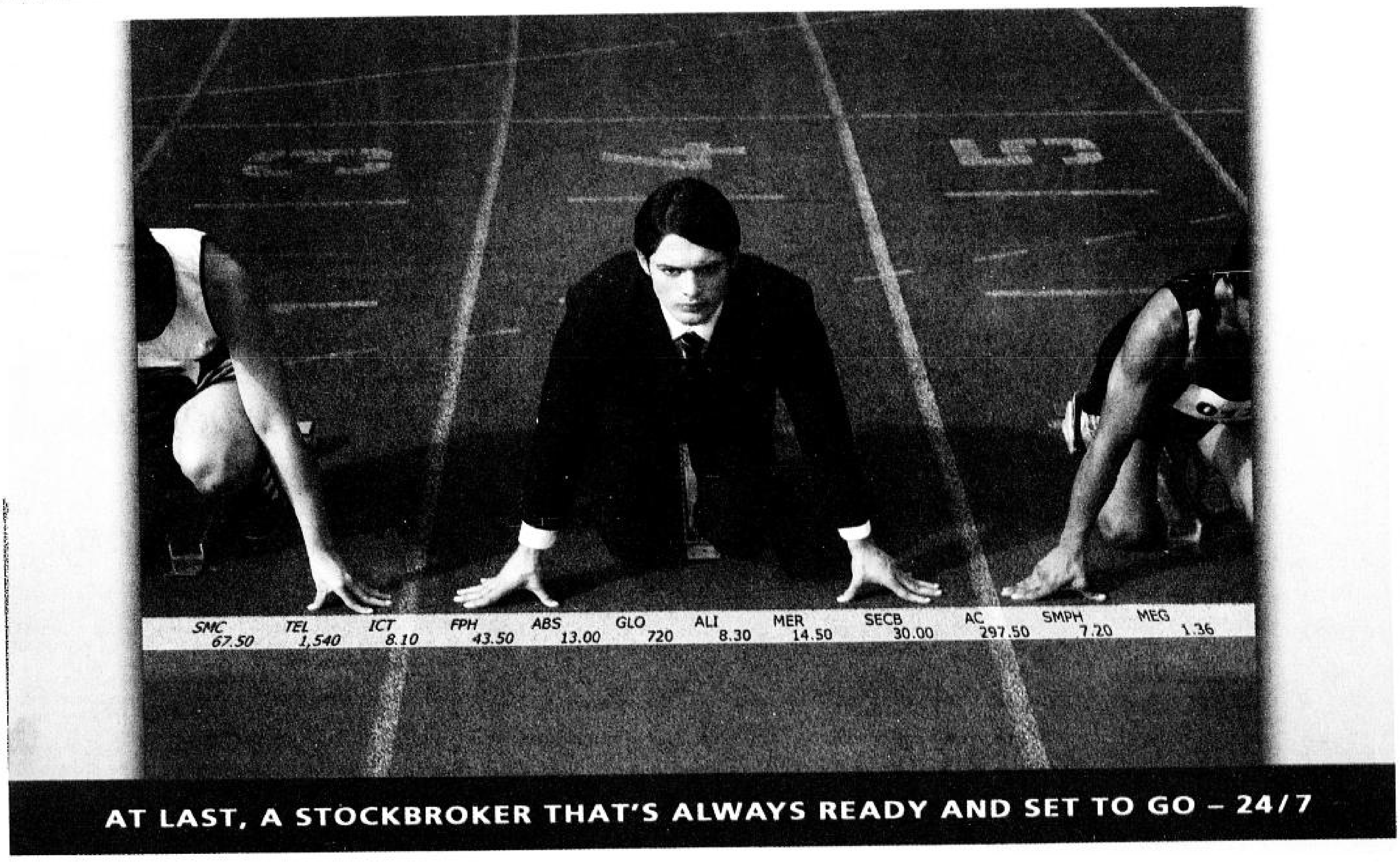
1. Yakult
2. Lucky Me instant mami (chicken)
3. Zest-o orange juice drink
4. SM Bonus fresh or chilled chicken
5. Lucky Me instant mami (beef)
6. Lucky Me pancit canton (hot chili)
7. Nestlé Chuckie milk
8. Lucky Me pancit canton (chili mansi)



9. SM Bonus refined white sugar
10. Big 250 drink (orange flavor)

SM Supermarket reported the following top 10 bestsellers for December:

1. ham
2. fresh chicken
3. all purpose cream
4. condensed milk
5. bread
6. fruit cocktail
7. spaghetti noodles and sauce
8. softdrinks
9. cheese
10. wine



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Tough year expected for retailers

REMITTANCES from Filipinos working overseas are a boon to retail firms.

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

WITH HIGH OIL PRICES, A gloomy economic outlook and lingering political uncertainties weighing on the Philippines, 2006 promises to be a tough one for the retail sector.

Roberto Claudio, vice president of the Philippine Retailers Association, tells BusinessMonday that the rising cost of living has forced many Filipino consumers to cut back on spending, and this does not bode well for retailers.

Claudio says a particular concern in 2005 was the proliferation of flea markets all over the capital of Metro Manila that were siphoning sales away from consumer goods companies, most of which have establishments in malls and department stores.

Flea markets and bazaars have sprouted in the metropolis and in key urban centers, especially in the months leading to Christmas, as Filipinos tighten their purse strings.

Even the well-heeled crowd has joined the Filipinos from the lower-income brackets in scouring the flea markets and bazaars for bargains.

He says November last year was a "particularly terrible" month with retail sales down between 15 percent and 50 percent over the previous year.

Retailers usually count on Christmas to perk up sales, with as much as 25 percent of annual sales pouring in during the Christmas rush. But expectations did not pan out in 2005.

"The traditional uptick before Christmas did not happen in 2005," Claudio says.

And there is little hope that the situation will change significantly this year.

The flea market industry has become so established that entire buildings in the bargain hunters' mecca of Divisoria in Manila have been put up.

Claudio says the PRA has already called the attention of the Departments of Trade and Industry and Finance to the establishment of these flea market centers in Divisoria on grounds that these are run by companies that do not pay the right taxes.

"What we are objecting to is that we are not competing on an even playing field because they do not pay the right taxes, they do not pay minimum wage and many of the goods are counterfeit," he adds.

Samie Lim, vice president for tourism, retailing and franchising of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, offers a more optimistic outlook on the retail sector this year.

Lim says Filipinos have always been known for their resilience, thus, they would adjust easily to the changing times.

This means that while there has been a noticeable decline in the purchases in 2005, there was a corresponding increase in the savings rate, estimated at as high as 26 percent of income.

The increase in savings was attributed to anticipation of more difficult times ahead. Filipinos are saving for a rainy day, so to speak.

"But with the confidence level starting to come back, I see that Filipinos will be spending more this year," Lim says.

Another cause for optimism is the influx of remittances from the growing legion of Filipinos working overseas.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas estimates that remittances from overseas Filipino workers surged 28 percent in the first nine months of the year to $7.9 billion, helping keep the country's dollar holdings at a healthy level.

For September alone, the more than eight million OFWs sent $941 million to their relatives in the Philippines, the bulk of which goes into consumption.

The government expects deployment of Filipinos to continue over the next few years with the global demand for Filipino talent, especially nurses, doctors and teachers, which will translate into more remittances.

It is with these factors in mind that many retail operators have decided to open up new malls over the next two to three years.

New malls that are scheduled to soon add to the retail landscape include the SM Mall of Asia of the SM group of companies with a gross floor area of 452,000 square meters and the Ayala North Triangle Depot of Ayala Land Inc. with 250,000 square meters.

The malls are scheduled to be in operation by 2006 and 2007, respectively.

Pacita Juan, head of the Association of Filipino Franchisers Inc. and CEO of Figaro Coffee Corp., says retail firms that will come out ahead this year are those that have established a good relationship with their customers.

She explains that with the wealth of choices in the market and Filipinos becoming more discriminating in their purchases, they would flock to those firms that offer value for money.

And these firms are usually those that have established a good brand.

One of these is the Greenhills Shopping Center.

Rex Drilon II, chief operating officer of Ortigas and Co. which operates the Greenhills Shopping Center and Tiendesitas, says 2005 was a good year because the company has long carved its niche in the flea market business.

"The key is the ability to take care of the merchants and the shoppers," Drilon says.

Thus, despite the marked decline in the purchasing power of Filipinos, the Ortigas group maintained its share of the Filipinos' wallet.

Due largely to the operations of the Greenhills Shopping Center, the group was able to post a double-digit growth in its revenue and profit for 2005.

With continued product innovation, Drilon was confident that the company would post the same growth in 2006.

I know what you bought last year

Shopwise

SHOPWISE VICE PRESIDENT CATHERINE Y. Tantoco says in terms of food categories the following did well: baked goods, pastas, biscuits and beverages. "The number one selling item was the pandesal followed by six variants of Lucky Me instant noodles, Coca-Cola light, Zesto and Oishi Choco crackers."

"In the non-food division the following categories did well—laundry products and soaps. The number one selling item was Downy followed by five variants of Surf, two variants of Tide, Likas Papaya soap and Safeguard white."

Tantoco says in the general merchandise departments it was the home items that performed particular well: decor, small electrics and toys.

In fashion, accessories and bags were the best performing categories.

Blim's Fine Furniture

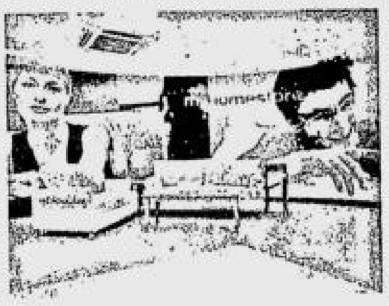
BLIM'S PRESIDENT SAMIE LIM NOTES consumers tended to buy furniture for comfort and entertainment with the LaZ-Boy and Cinema lounge pieces a perfect fit for the giant projection and plasma TVs sold at Blim's sister firm, Automatic Centre. Lim says the wide price range for the LaZ Boy (from P18,000 to P115,000 apiece) gives customers flexibility in choices.

He also notes that more buyers were buying furniture as a set (living room, bedroom, kitchen/dining room) rather than individual items. This is the reason why furniture is displayed in vignettes or room settings in Blim's 11 stores nationwide.

"We get licensed professionals from the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers to do our set pieces," says Lim who notes that Blim's also provides professional interior design consultancy at its Ortigas Home Depot branch.

Top 5 furniture items for 2005

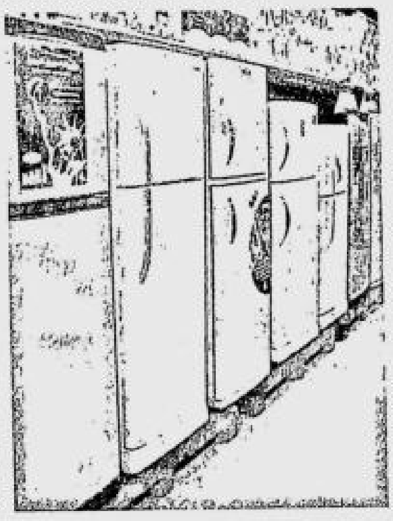
1. La-Z-Boy recliners and loungers
2. Simmons sofa and Simmons sofa Bed
3. La Nouva sofa
4. Office furniture
5. Cinema lounge (elegant and comfortable reclining couches designed for home cinemas)



SM Home

1. Sectional sofas
2. Tufted sofas (leather and fabric)
3. Lounge chairs– 'La-Z-Boy look-alikes'
4. Space savers (double decker beds with pull-out/ wall shelvings, ladder book cases
5. ottoman with storage
6. textured curtains
7 leather upholstered dining sets
8. beds, accent chairs, umbra clocks and picture frames
9. Hanging lanterns and lamps
10. Red hand blown vase collection from Poland

Automatic Centre



TOP 10 APPLIANCES/GADGETS PEOPLE bought in 2005

Magic Sing
TVs
Refrigerators
Washing machines
Gas ranges an d stoves
DVD Players
Stereo Components
Home Theater System (color TV, DVD Player, Speakers, etc.)

Category with substantial increase in popularity (due to the health craze)

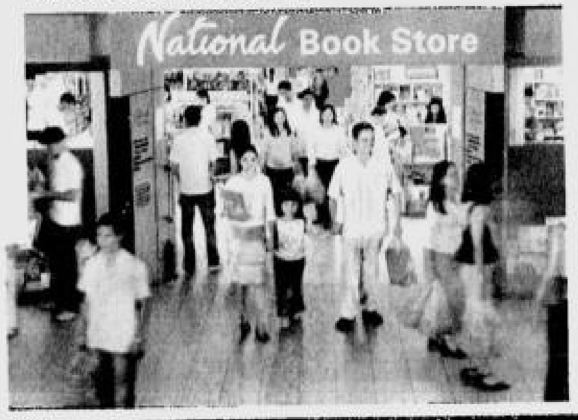
1. Omron Blood Pressure Monitor
2. Omron Pulse Massager
3. Omron Massage Chair
4. Juice extractor
5. Griller
6. Aromatherapy system

10 bestselling items of Samsung Electronics Phils. in 2005

1. Samsung SGH D500 mobile phone
2. LCD TV
3. Plasma TV
4. Side by side ref
5. No frost ref
6. LCD monitor
7. DLP projection TV
8. Fully automatic washing machine
9. Aircon with silver nano
10. Optical disk drive

National Bookstore

1. Intermediate pad, yellow pad, copy paper
2. Plastic cover, folder, plastic envelope, glue, scissors
3. Ballpen, marker, sign pen
4. Inkjet cartridge (HP), calculator, staple wire
5. Crayola colors in packs of 16 and 24; glitter glue
6. Orion ruler, drafting table, protractor
7. backpack, trolley bags
8. Greeting cards, all occasion cards
9. Photo albums, scrabook albums
10. Gift bags, ribbons, gift tags



Bench

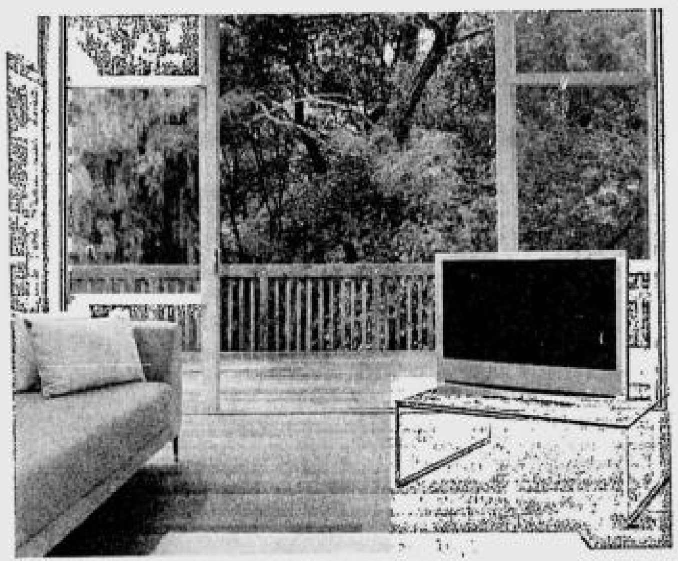
I wear Bench!

BENCH T-SHIRTS, made by Suyen Corp., continued to be the bestselling item of the 19-year-old firm, according to its general manager Jude Ong.

Ong says the top five bestsellers of Bench last Christmas were:

1. T-shirts
2. bags for women
3. caps
4. underwear
5. denims

Although Bench shirts are not the cheapest in the market, Ong says consumers still go for value for money. He says their consumers cut across all sectors and their underwear line is very strong in the A, B, market.



THE LOCAL market's large appetite for DVD camcorders, LCD and rear-projection televisions last December surprised manufacturers.

Filipinos buying more expensive consumer electronics–Sony

By Daxim L. Lucas

FILIPINOS ARE BUYING MORE and more high-end consumer electronic products, belying popular perception that the local market lags its neighbors in terms of sophistication.

This was the observation made by Sony Philippines Inc. president and managing director Hiroaki Kobayashi, in a press briefing to report on the company's performance in 2005.

"In fact, [the Filipinos'] level of appreciation for key technologies resemble[s] closely [that of] their American counterparts," he said.

In particular, Kobayashi cited the local market's large appetite for DVD camcorders and liquid crystal display (LCD) and rear-projection televisions during the last Christmas season, a phenomenon he called "surprising."

The local Sony chief said the sale of DVD camcorders during the last holiday season has been robust, with the firm capturing 20 percent of the market, compared to only 5 percent during the same period last year.

Because of this, he said the country now has one of the highest ratios of DVD camcorders to total camcorder sales in Asia, approximating the 28 percent sales in Malaysia and Japan, and close to the 23 percent seen in the US market.

"Filipinos are very clever," Kobayashi said. "They lead the way for their Asian neighbors in embracing advancements in technology."

He noted that the market for consumer audio-video equipment during the last Christmas season actually shrank by "10 to 20 percent" from the previous year, although he pointed to the market shift in preference newer—and more expensive—products.

"Buyers have been shifting to higher end models, so business was good last Christmas," he said.

The high level of acceptance for new technology has been aided by the company's strong marketing drive,but he admitted that the market's response has been quicker than expected.

Kobayashi said Sony now holds an average of "over 30 percent" of the local consumer electronics market, and between 70 to 80 percent of the market for DVD products.

Because of this, the company is focusing even more on pushing its line of audio-video products which make up an estimated 95 percent of Sony Philippines' sales.

The country is also the leading market for LCD televisions in Asia for both the 26-to 39-inch and 40- to 42-inch categories. In 2005, the Philippines' sales of Sony LCD televisions grew by more than 10 times over the previous year's level.

"When we launched the Bravia, our new generation of LCD TVs, we were targeting to capture more than 40 percent of the flat device TV market," he said. "Our sales figures last Christmas have exceeded our own target and expectations."

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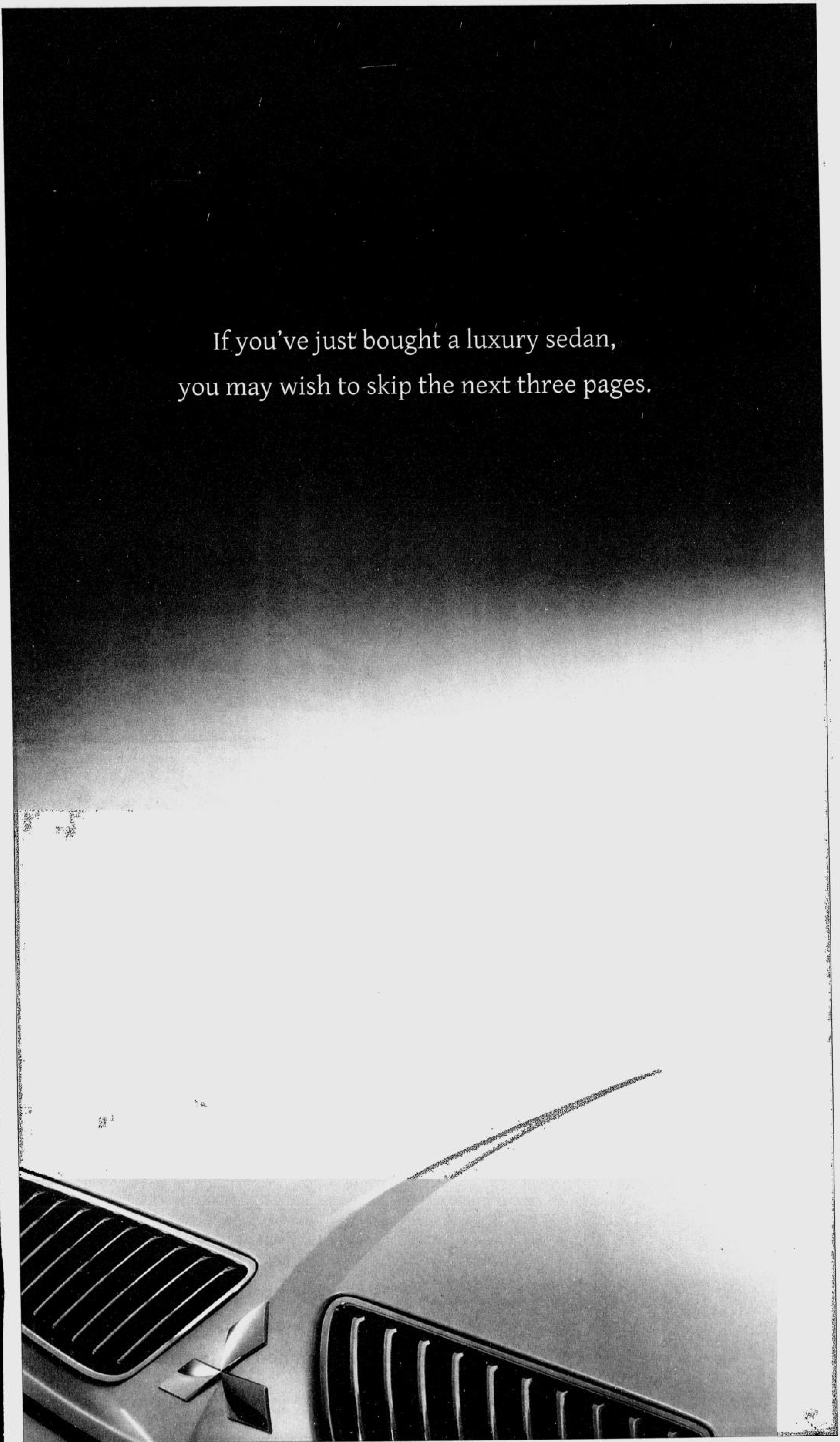
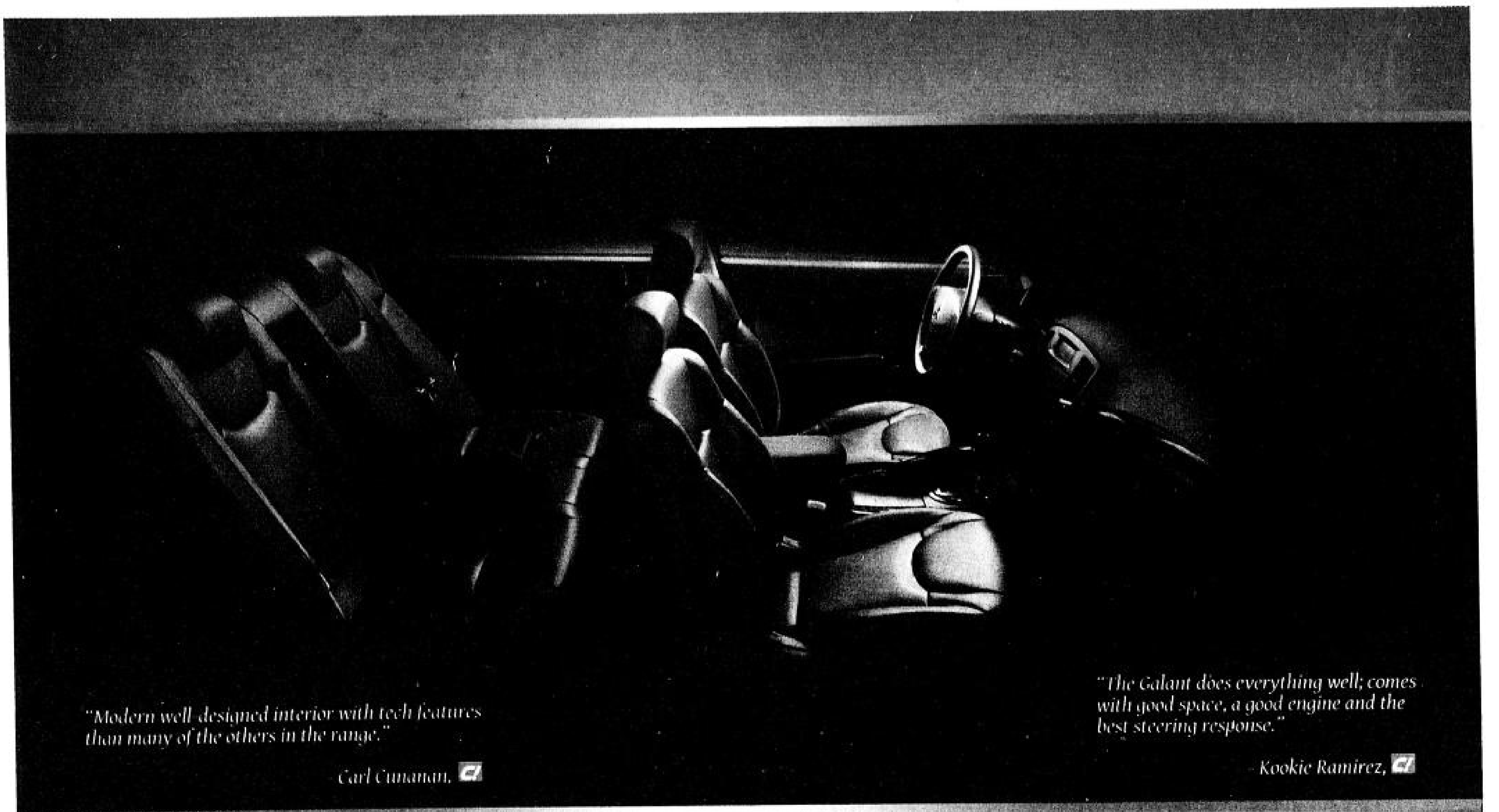

If you’ve just bought a luxury sedan,
you may wish to skip the next three pages.

The all-new Mitsubishi Ga

2.4 MIVEC Engine, INVECS II Sportro
5-star crash test rating by the US National Hi
Quad headlamps with auto-on feature, High Intensi
Electroluminescent instrumentation cluster,

alant 240M is finally here.

nic transmission, Bigger cabin space,
ghway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA),
ty Discharge (HID) with selectable level adjustment,
Fully automatic aircon with climate control.



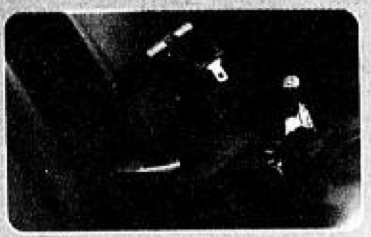
"Modern well-designed interior with tech features than many of the others in the range."

Carl Cunanan, CI

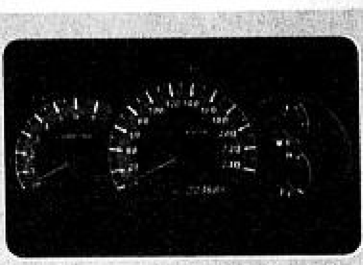
"The Galant does everything well; comes with good space, a good engine and the best steering response."

- Kookie Ramirez, CI

Invecs-II 4-A/T with Sportronic



Rear Seat Armrest with Cup Holder & Compartment



Electroluminescent Instrumentation Cluster

8-Way Power Adjustable Driver Seat

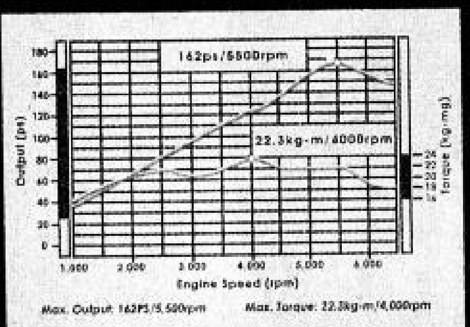
Front Seat Cup Holders

"The 4-cylinder MIVEC engine feels like it could hold its own against the V6s."

- Chris Van Hoven, CI

"... the engine, interior, and ride quality are all top notch."

- Angelo Puyat, CI



Designed for performance and quick response, this 16-valve 4G69 engine also sets new standards for efficiency and low emissions. Equipped with MIVEC (Mitsubishi Innovative Valve timing and lift Electronic Control) technology, it can adjust the valve timing for optimal performance for all driving conditions. This enables it to produce higher torque at low rpm ranges for quick, clean starts, and higher output in the high ranges for better passing ability.

MIVEC employs a multiple-cam lobe system to vary valve timing depending on engine speed. At 3,600rpm, the engine switches control of each cylinder's twin intake valves from low and medium speed to high speed cam profiles, increasing the overlap between the intake and exhaust and boosting output throughout the high rev range.

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS		GALANT 240M A/T Sportronic
Overall Length	(mm)	4885
Overall Width	(mm)	1840
Overall Height	(mm)	1480
Cabin Room Length	(mm)	1997
Wheelbase	(mm)	2750
Tread (Front/Rear)	(mm)	1570 / 1570
Ground Clearance	(mm)	160
Fuel Tank Capacity	(liter)	67
ENGINE		
Model & Type		InLine-4, MIVEC
Fuel System		Multi-Port Fuel Injection
Displacement	(cc)	2378
Compression Ratio		9.5:1
Max. Power	(ps/rpm)	162/5500
Max. Torque	(kg-m/rpm)	22.3@4000
TRANSMISSION		
Model		F4A42, INVECS II Sportronic, 4-Speed
WHEELS AND TIRES		
Wheel Design		7-Spoke
Wheel Size		16" x 6.5"
Tires		215/60 R16

SUSPENSION	
Front	Independent McPherson with Stabilizer Bar
Rear	Multi-link with Coil Springs and Stabilizer Bar
BRAKES	
Front	15" Ventilated Discs
Rear	14" Solid Discs
Assist	Tandem Brake Booster
ABS	Equipped with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution
STEERING	
Type	Rack and Pinion with Power Assist
Steering Wheel	Leather Wrapped, 4-Spoke Type
Tilt Adjusment	Equipped

SAFETY

- Driver Side SRS Air Bag • Side Impact Beam
- 3 Point ELR Seatbelts x 2 for Front Passengers
- 3 Point ELR Seatbelts x 2 plus 2 point Lapbelt x 1 for Rear Passengers
- ISO-Fix Child Seat Provision x 2 • Rear Demister
- HID Headlamps with Selectable Level Adjustment
- Automatic On Headlamp System
- Rear Bumper Parking Sensors
- High Contrast LED Type Rear Combination Lamps and Third Brake Lamp
- Keyless Entry with Trunk Release Feature
- Alarm System with Engine Immobilizer Feature
- Compressed Gas Strut Assisted Hood and Trunk
- Emergency Trunk Lid Release Latch

INTERIOR

- Leather Seats • 8-Way Power Adjustable Driver Seat
- Full Automatic Climate Control System • Rear Aircon Vents
- Integrated CD/MP3/FM/AM Entertainment System (Upgradable with Subwoofer and Center Speaker)
- 3-Stage High Contrast, Ice-Blue Illumination for the Full Meter Instrument Panel
- Central Locking System • Power Side Mirrors with Fold Function
- Chrome Scuff Plates • Chrome Inner Door Handles
- Front Cup Holders • Sunglass Pocket • Rear Sunshade
- Darkwood and Chrome Accents for Door Trims
- Slide Adjustable Center Armrest • Floormats
- Rear Armrest with Integrated Cupholders and Compartment
- Dual Room and Map Lamps • Rear Reading Lamps
- Trunk Through Access • Rear Adjustable Headrest
- Illuminated Vanity Mirrors for both Driver and Passenger Sunvisors
- Retractable Front Door Pockets

EXTERIOR

- Halogen Foglamps • Fin Type Antenna • Chrome Tailpipe Finisher
- Color-Keyed Door Moulding with Chrome Insert
- Side Mirrors with Integrated Turn Lamps

1. Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corporation reserves the right to alter any specifications without prior notice.
2. Photos shown may differ from the actual unit.

See the all-new Mitsubishi Galant 240M now at your nearest dealer and schedule for a test drive.

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Drive Inspired

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

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Call to action: Country above self

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Evelyn R. Singson

NOT MANY OF US HAVE BEEN around the past 55 years, but today is the very first time that a woman is delivering the inaugural address as MAP president.

I was intrigued by the reaction of people who heard of my election to this prestigious position. They seemed more impressed that a woman was elected to this office, rather than that I, as a person, had the distinct privilege of being elected president.

My take is that perhaps unintentionally, MAP's core membership of CEOs are still inclined to the tradition that MAP should elect a man at its helm, as has been the case year after year for more than half a century.

The honor of being the first woman president, however, is not mine. It belongs to Corazon dela Paz when she assumed the MAP presidency from Bobby de Ocampo when Bobby was appointed secretary of finance in 1994.

But by today's enlightened standards of equality and opportunity, two women out of 57 or 1/3 of one percent is not a politically correct ratio, considering there are 87 female members out of a total of 761.

Meritocracy

MAP is a meritocracy and its leadership is not a prerogative of gender. Rather, it is awarded on the basis of qualifications, initiative, motivation and willingness to serve, qualities equally given out by God to both genders.

Your 2006 board has aptly chosen Call to action: Country above self as our theme for the year.

More than a catchy slogan, we want this to represent the values and ideals that MAP holds dear as corporate and individual citizens of this country.

I refer to such conservative and perhaps old-fashioned values as action, not rhetoric; service to others and concern for the larger common good, instead of total focus on self; doing what is right instead of what is easy; pride and love of country over cynicism, complacency and apathy.

Love of country is the only emotion compelling enough to unite us into purposeful action and spirited cooperation.

I hasten to add that the love of country I speak of is a catalyst that should be an engine of practical, useful, sensible and meaningful change. Love of country is not a luxury we can afford to ignore; it is the necessary ingredient to economic success.

Look at what passionate love of country and intense national pride have done for our more prosperous Asian neighbors!

MAP is an organization like no other. We count among our members business leaders and captains of industry who run the country's largest corporations.

We are also proud to have in our midst corporate executives and their companies who constitute the country's largest taxpayers. Some among us have walked the corridors of political power as senior government officials and Cabinet ministers under different administrations.

Members of the academe with power to influence young minds, as well as hardworking, driven entrepreneurs who create wealth and provide employment in the countryside, are in our roster. With this caliber of membership, MAP can be as influential and as assertive as it wants to be.

We are well aware of the policy weaknesses, barriers and disincentives to growth and investment that have accumulated like barnacle over the years. This Byzantine infrastructure has caused wary international investors to shy away from our country in favor of our neighbors.

So what can MAP do?

MAP can lead the efforts toward the deconstruction and dismantling of unproductive rules and guidelines.

We can clear the path of obstructions and bureaucratic red tape. We can provide a more compelling spectrum of investment opportunities and allow for a smoother, stronger inflow of much-needed direct foreign investments into our country.

We can be instrumental in tearing down the barricades to allow for the free and deregulated operation of market forces. MAP can work for a government that stimulates, attracts and supports rather than inhibits, restricts and encroaches upon the domain of private enterprise.

If MAP desires to remain a relevant instrument of macro-economic change and an active proponent of constructive reforms, it needs the strong support and commitment of our members. We realize and accept that this support and commitment are not easily given nor can they be taken for granted. We will work hard to earn them.

We will keep communication lines open to constantly feel your pulse, your needs and expectations and aspire to quickly address them. In pursuit of these ends, your board commits to do the following:

1. We will spearhead and organize events and situations to bring our members closer together.

It is possible that we have not tapped into this rich internal resource and database. Hence, we have not fully optimized the possibilities and potential of doing business and helping each other.

2. Much like our counterpart management associations in other countries, MAP will assist in the continuing education of our membership.

We will help the membership gain access to the newest and state-of-the art educational tools and materials on management, leadership, business, technology and self-improvement that are available in the market place.

We will bring these to our members, through the MAP Portal or through seminars, conferences and discussion fora. Whenever possible, we will attempt to bring local and international experts to share with us their ideas, concepts, innovations and trends in the global market.

3. MAP is cognizant of the great importance of achieving balance, health and happiness in our lives. To meet members' expressed interest for a well-rounded holistic approach to self-discovery and development, we intend to broaden our training goals to cover not only topics on professional and career growth, but likewise on physical and emotional health. Discussions about Executive Health and Wellness, Family Life, Spiritual Enlightenment, Food and Wine ranked high in our survey of preferences.

Many of our members are seeking different challenges and goals in their life cycle. They have articulated their desire to explore subjects that will enrich their human spirit or ideas that will provide a lasting legacy for their achievements. We will look into these.

Recently, your board approved the reactivation of its membership to the Asian Association of Management Organizations, where the Philippines remains the only non-member.

We feel it is imperative to be part of this regional management bloc to bring the Philippine perspective to this Asian alliance.

Once again, the derivative advantages of cross-cultural networking come into play.

We must be plugged in. As global geopolitics and economics shift to Asia as China, India, Japan and Australia flex their muscles, this is no time for the Philippines to be an isolated island and an outsider.

On another front, the MAP Research and Development Foundation has been reactivated to support the requirements of our committees, particularly for projects that require extensive and exhaustive research and development work.

Let me now return to our chosen theme of the year. Some of you may say that COUNTRY ABOVE SELF is just another motherhood platitude. Perhaps it is; but if we adopt it as our PARADIGM, we can eventually actualize it and make it part of our way of life.

We can begin by asking ourselves one question every time we make an important decision—is this ultimately good for my country? Not surprisingly, choosing country is difficult because, often, it entails short-term pain and sacrifice.

When bottom lines and our pocketbooks are hit or threatened, we automatically revert to our default mode: thinking only about our self interest.

Sadly, this TO-EACH-HIS-OWN mentality might be the real reason why we've been the "Sick Old Man of Asia" for decades. Contrary to conventional wisdom, it is not corruption which has held us down because corruption is present even in the most economically advanced countries.

Rather, it is because Filipinos of all social classes have little love for their country. It is not "top of the mind" in our consciousness as a people.

Ask yourself these

Let us test ourselves with these sample questions: Isn't it easier to compromise on taxes, in spite of knowing the money will not go to the government coffers, because doing so will save us several thousand pesos?

Isn't it cheaper to pay the judge and get a favorable decision than to let justice take its course?

Isn't it wiser to give a kickback to the approving officer than to go through a fair bidding?

How often have we said "*ako ang bahala sa iyo*" or "I will take care of you" to motivate a corrupt officer to do our bidding? But such case-to-case, one-on-one, shortcuts for the sake of EXPEDIENCY have indirectly cost us more. Much, much more, as a country and as a people.

Because they are so commonplace and almost second nature, these ingrained behavior patterns don't bother us anymore. We have learned to accept them as part and parcel of the cost and manner of doing business here. Repeated many times over and in bigger magnitudes, these practices create a chain reaction that has condemned our country to the top of the corruption pile and to the bottom of the competitive list.

Individually and collectively, we at MAP must do what we can to restore *delicadeza*, shame and a sense of outrage against what have now become commonplace malpractices.

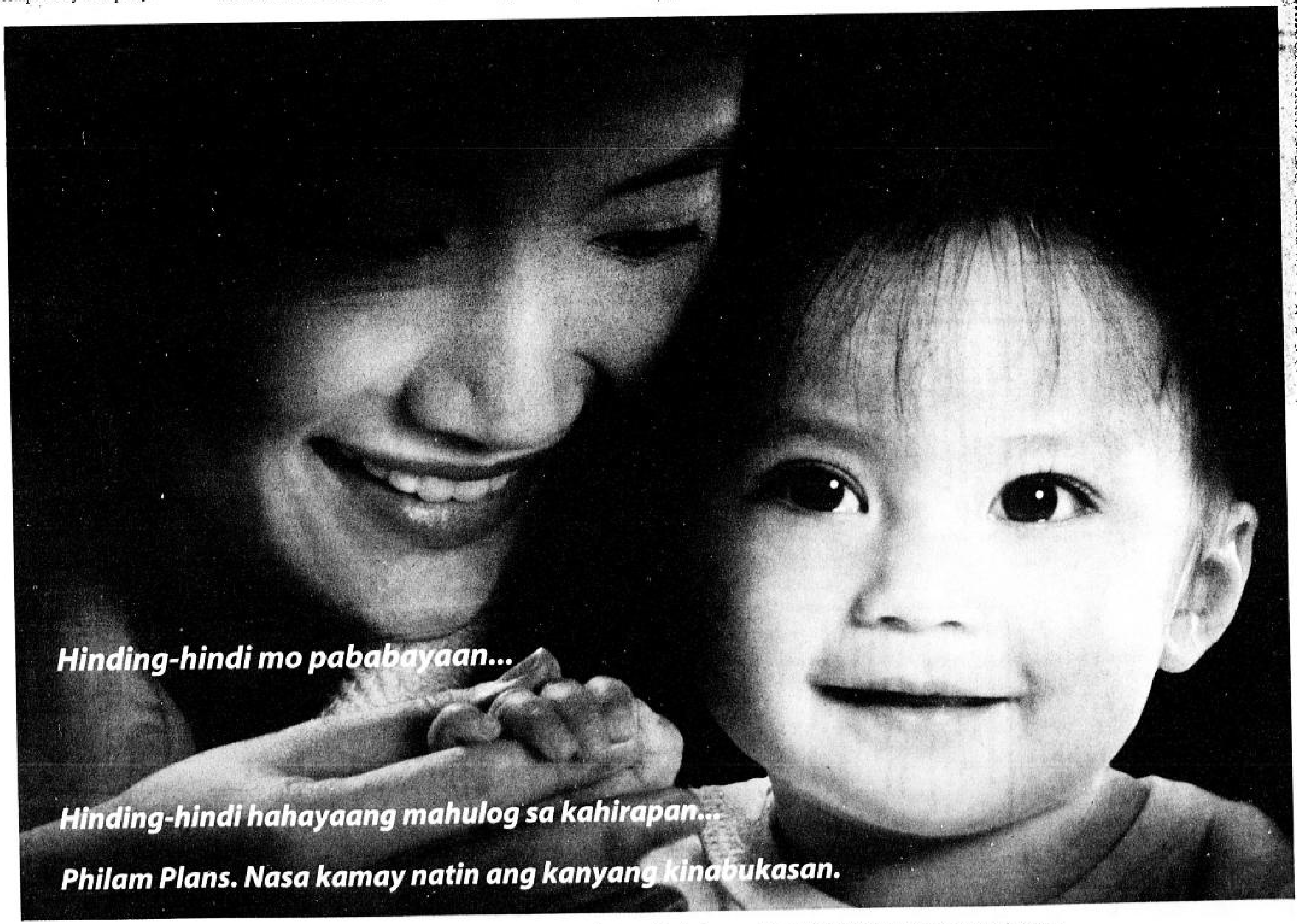
To the extent possible, we must reclaim our dignity as a nation. Through programs that educate and enlighten not only ourselves but also those whom we deal with, we can bring back reasonable benchmarks against which we can measure ourselves.

By recognizing and rewarding excellence and instances of exemplary behavior, we can encourage our employees and our youth. By responsibly speaking out and condemning corrupt practices and pursuing legal means to prosecute egregious offenders when warranted, we can deter miscreants from giving Philippine business a bad name.

Finally, by being ourselves visible role models of the values we have publicly espoused—that of accountability, credibility, transparency, fairness, integrity and service to others—we can demonstrate that good governance and ethics are compatible with sound business practice and common sense.

If we can only do as we speak and live by it, or as we often say "walk the walk and talk the talk," then MAP would have planted the seeds of change. How fast and how much the seeds will grow depend on our passion to plant these seeds around by our deeds and by our examples.

(Edited inaugural address delivered by the author during the 57th MAP inaugural meeting on Jan. 24, 2006. The author is 2006 president of eBusiness Services Inc. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)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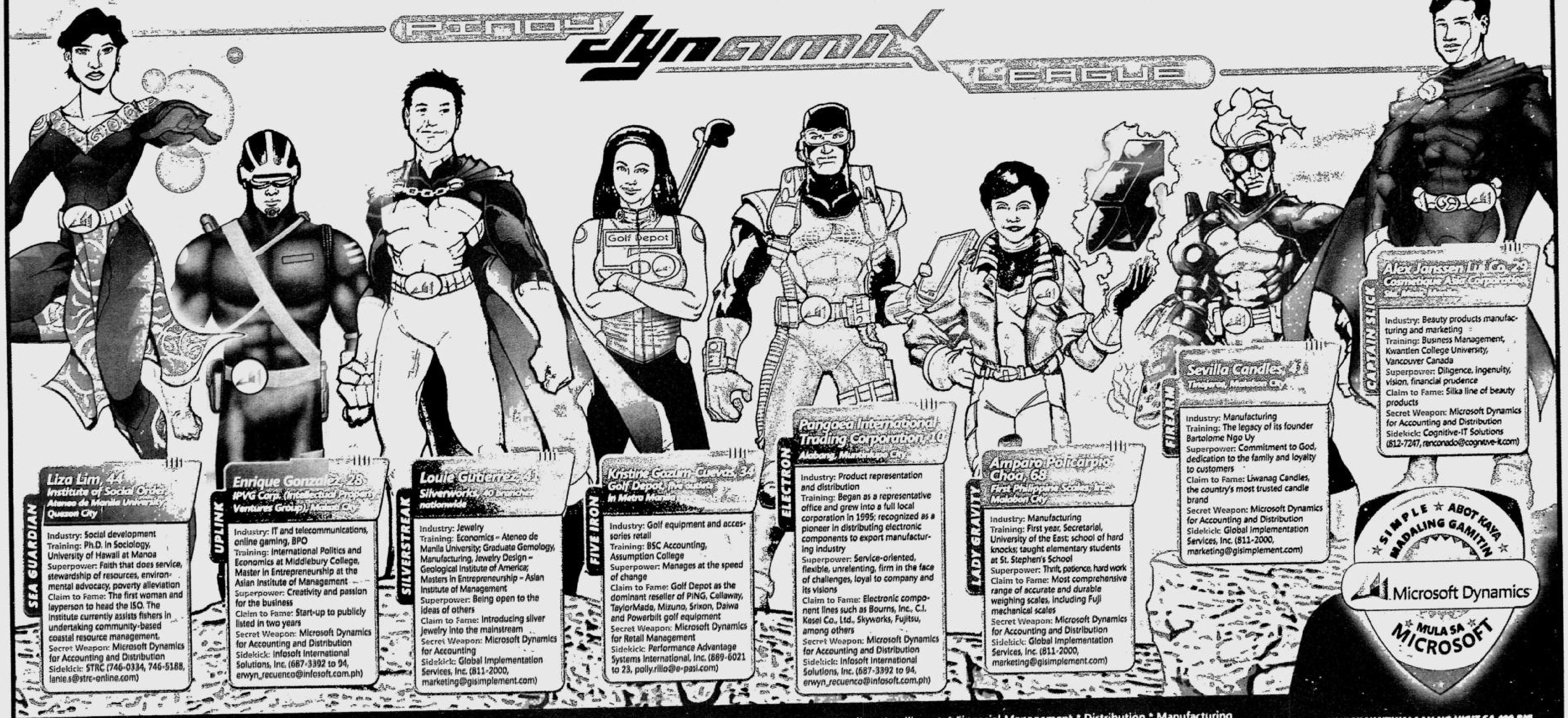

SEA GUARDIAN

Liza Lim, 44
Institute of Social Order
Ateneo de Manila University,
Quezon City

Industry: Social development
Training: Ph.D. in Sociology, University of Hawaii at Manoa
Superpower: Faith that does service, stewardship of resources, environmental advocacy, poverty alleviation
Claim to Fame: The first woman and layperson to head the ISO. The Institute currently assists fishers in undertaking community-based coastal resource management.
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Accounting and Distribution
Sidekick: STRC (746-0334, 746-5188, lanie.s@strc-online.com)

UPLINK

Enrique Gonzalez, 28
IPVG Corp. (Intellectual Property Ventures Group), Makati City

Industry: IT and telecommunications, online gaming, BPO
Training: International Politics and Economics at Middlebury College, Master in Entrepreneurship at the Asian Institute of Management
Superpower: Creativity and passion for the business
Claim to Fame: Start-up to publicly listed in two years
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Accounting and Distribution
Sidekick: Infosoft International Solutions, Inc. (687-3392 to 94, erwyn_recuenco@infosoft.com.ph)

SILVERSTREAK

Louie Gutierrez, 4[illegible]
Silverworks, 40 branches nationwide

Industry: Jewelry
Training: Economics – Ateneo de Manila University; Graduate Gemology, Manufacturing, Jewelry Design – Geological Institute of America; Masters in Entrepreneurship – Asian Institute of Management
Superpower: Being open to the ideas of others
Claim to Fame: Introducing silver jewelry into the mainstream
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Accounting
Sidekick: Global Implementation Services, Inc. (811-2000, marketing@gisimplement.com)

FIVE IRON

Kristine Gazum-Cuevas, 34
Golf Depot, five outlets in Metro Manila

Industry: Golf equipment and accessories retail
Training: BSC Accounting, Assumption College
Superpower: Manages at the speed of change
Claim to Fame: Golf Depot as the dominant reseller of PING, Callaway, TaylorMade, Mizuno, Srixon, Daiwa and Powerbilt golf equipment
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Retail Management
Sidekick: Performance Advantage Systems International, Inc. (889-6021 to 23, polly.rillo@e-pasi.com)

ELECTRON

Pangaea International Trading Corporation, 10
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

Industry: Product representation and distribution
Training: Began as a representative office and grew into a full local corporation in 1995; recognized as a pioneer in distributing electronic components to export manufacturing industry
Superpower: Service-oriented, flexible, unrelenting, firm in the face of challenges, loyal to company and its visions
Claim to Fame: Electronic component lines such as Bourns, Inc., C.I. Kasei Co., Ltd., Skyworks, Fujitsu, among others
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Accounting and Distribution
Sidekick: Infosoft International Solutions, Inc. (687-3392 to 94, erwyn_recuenco@infosoft.com.ph)

LADY GRAVITY

Amparo Policarpio Choa, 68
First Philippine Scales, Inc.
Malabon City

Industry: Manufacturing
Training: First year, Secretarial, University of the East; school of hard knocks; taught elementary students at St. Stephen's School
Superpower: Thrift, patience, hard work
Claim to Fame: Most comprehensive range of accurate and durable weighing scales, including Fuji mechanical scales
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Accounting and Distribution
Sidekick: Global Implementation Services, Inc. (811-2000, marketing@gisimplement.com)

FIREARM

Sevilla Candles, 41
[illegible] City

Industry: Manufacturing
Training: The legacy of its founder Bartolome Ngo Uy
Superpower: Commitment to God, dedication to the family and loyalty to customers
Claim to Fame: Liwanag Candles, the country's most trusted candle brand
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Accounting and Distribution
Sidekick: Global Implementation Services, Inc. (811-2000, marketing@gisimplement.com)

CAPTAIN SLICK

Alex Janssen Li Co, 29
Cosmetique Asia Corporation
[illegible]

Industry: Beauty products manufacturing and marketing
Training: Business Management, Kwantlen College University, Vancouver Canada
Superpower: Diligence, ingenuity, vision, financial prudence
Claim to Fame: Silka line of beauty products
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Accounting and Distribution
Sidekick: Cognitive-IT Solutions (812-7247, renconado@cognitive-it.com)

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ENGAGING new plays /C2

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THE MAKILING Ensemble

Arts take February by storm

The National Arts Month festivities promise to be bigger, better

NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez and commissioner Felipe de Leon Jr.

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero

FEBRUARY—the month of love, the arts and meaningful historical events—is upon us.

For Marian devotees, February is also a significant month. "On Feb. 2 the Church celebrates the Purification of Our Lady," writes (the late National Artist) Nick Joaquin in his "Almanac for Manileños" (Mr. & Ms. Publications, 1979). "Forty days after the Nativity, Mary and Joseph went up to Jerusalem for her purification in the Temple and the presentation of her Child."

As for love, continues Old Nick, "the traditional advocate of our lovers was St. Anthony of Padua to whom Filipino girls prayed to find a true lover or to recover a straying one."

On Feb. 4, 1899, the American forces launched war upon the Filipinos, with little or no provocation from our side. By the time hostilities dwindled during 1902, more than a million Filipinos were dead of war, famine, and other related causes.

Early in February 1945, the Americans returned to reclaim the colony from the brutal Japanese. The southern districts of Manila went up in flames; 100,000 Filipino men, women and children perished. Manila was the most destroyed city after Warsaw.

Ironically this month, February, is now dedicated to Philippine-Japanese friendship.

And there's Edsa I, 1986, a great event by itself (and never mind the aftermath).

"Edsa I occurred in February," NCCA (National Commission for Culture and the Arts) executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez reminded the media present during a recent press conference, at Barbara's Restaurant in Intramuros, Manila, to announce National Arts Month. "February is also Heritage Month," she added.

"Historical consciousness is important," agreed NCCA commissioner Felipe

ARTS/ C2

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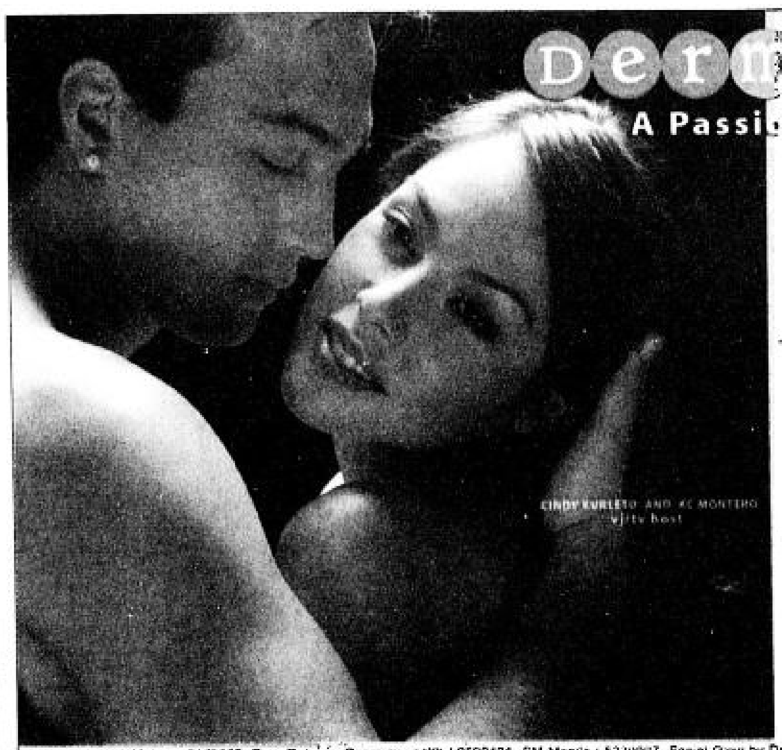
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Heritage partnerships result in successful conservation

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

URBAN HERITAGE DOES NOT EXIST in a vacuum. Heritage buildings are part of daily life. Some are national monuments, others are buildings within an urban setting where people have lived for generations.

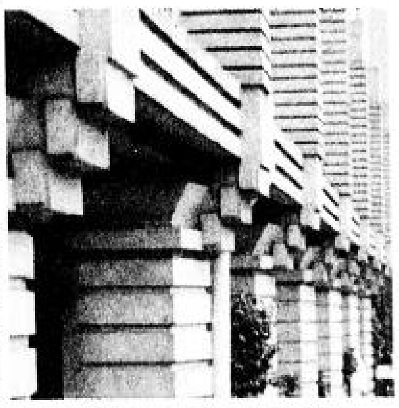
Although government-owned heritage building might be revered as part of national patrimony, they are also where bureaucrats work every day.

Religious buildings may be considered national heritage. But to the faithful, the structures are more than that. They are places where people practice their religion. They are places where priests and the religious live, work and pray.

An urban district might have high heritage value. But to its residents, it is where they live, work, shop, go to school, or relax.

Heritage integrates into the daily lives of people. It is an everyday part of life. Therefore, it is essential to involve the stakeholders in its conservation.

Successful conservation of heritage is achieved through a partnership between the public and private sectors, a relationship where the needs and expectations of both sides are understood and met.



THE ART Deco campus of FEU is an example of how conservation can have an impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Enlightened legislation is essential in protecting urban heritage. But the stakeholders must be included in each stage of the legislative process.

When stakeholders feel they are part of the conservation process and are its beneficiaries, and when they are aware conservation legislation protects their rights and improves their quality of life, then they take ownership of their heritage and participate in its conservation.

In other urban centers of Asia, legislative protection of heritage has resulted in people's dependency on government initiatives without any stakeholder participation. Such efforts have met with failure.

Walled City of Manila

Intramuros, the fortified center of Manila built by the Spanish in the mid-16th century, is the acknowledged national symbol of the Spanish colonial era that lasted almost 400 years. Until the early years of the 20th century, it was the government, religious, business, and residential center of Manila.

Heavily destroyed during World War II and the following years, the government founded the Intramuros Administration over 30 years ago to oversee reconstruction of the historic area.

It was the first urban area in the country with special conservation legislation, including strict architectural reconstruction guidelines implemented by a well-trained staff of historians and architects from the Intramuros Administration (IA).

The IA successfully reconstructed the war-damaged fortifications. It also built clusters of buildings in the Spanish colonial style that now house museums, shops, restaurants, and a small hotel. A few privately constructed buildings followed the Intramuros "style" for office and commercial use.

Intramuros is busy during the daytime, filling up with office workers and students from major universities in the area. However, at sundown everyone goes home. Then the area becomes a deserted ghost town.

Decades after the establishment of the IA, the rebuilding of the Walled City is far from complete. The plans did not envision encouraging structures that attract everyday life or encourage new residents to live in the quarter, nor did they encourage local residents to participate in the reconstruction of the heritage area.

Intramuros, principally regarded as a monument and therefore a tourist commodity, is a heritage island sadly not integrated into the everyday life of Manila.

PICTURESQUE Intramuros of Manila does not integrate with the everyday life of Manila as other heritage neighborhoods in the world successfully do.

Gota de Leche, FEU

Gota de Leche (Drop of Milk) is one of the oldest NGOs in the Philippines. Since its establishment in 1907, it has been distributing free milk to babies of needy families. It remains in the same building constructed in 1912, considered an important architectural landmark in the Philippines.

The organization restored its badly deteriorated heritage building in 2001 with unexpected results. The restored building has become a symbol of hope in the very congested University Belt neighborhood where Gota de Leche is located.

Residents noticed the restoration, as did former organization volunteers who, as a result of the new "image" of the Gota de Leche, renewed their commitment to the organization.

The once-forgotten organization has reestablished its position of respect with public and private leaders in the city.

A simple conservation program achieves unforeseen results. In 2003, Gota de Leche received the Unesco Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Award.

At the Far Eastern University in Manila, a campus-wide program to restore its Art Deco buildings built between 1939 and 1950 achieved astonishing and unexpected results. The conserved campus has since reestablished pride of place with students, faculty and alumni. People really felt good to be a part of FEU.

More important, the program initiated a private-public initiative for neighborhood revitalization. When restoration was completed, neighbors, noticing that their buildings needed improvement, grouped together and agreed on implementing simple measures such as cleaning sidewalks and repainting façades, leading to the organization of an association of neighborhood building and shop owners.

The first thing the association did was to make the mayor of Manila aware they had voluntarily improved the conditions of their street. Then they asked him to improve security, install street lighting, repair sidewalks, and improve other facilities, which the city government did because it saw how determined the local residents were to improve their neighborhood.

This is the first example in the Philippines where a heritage conservation project grew into a modest stakeholder improvement project that evolved into a public-private cooperation for urban revitalization.

The FEU conservation project won the Unesco Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Award in 2005. It is a good model to follow. It has all the qualities for success: stakeholder participation, government participation, and, most of all, it assures that the architectural heritage of Nicanor Reyes Street is preserved.

Feedback is welcome at afvillalon@hotmail.com

National Arts Month main events

Ani ng Sining: Celebrating a Bountiful Harvest in the Arts

A two-day celebration with various performances to formally open the National Arts Month on Feb. 4-5, Rizal Park.

Talugading

A 10-day festival of nightly performances, stage plays, music, dance and traditional games which officially launched the National Arts Month in Luzon at the Historical Tobacco Monopoly Plaza, Laoag.

Panggas: Sowing the Bounties of the Arts

The event formally launches the National Arts Month in the Visayas on Feb. 6, Bacolod. It features the Provincial Capitol Choir and the Bacolod Masskara Dancers. There will be a forum on the "state of the arts and culture in Negros and the Visayas."

Awit ng mga Birtuso

Regional collaborative productions that feature emerging theater and cultural forms nationwide. Organized by the NCCA National Committee on Music.

Websining

A nationwide visual arts competition organized by the NCCA National Committee on the Visual Arts harnessing digital technology on the theme, "Reap What You Sow."

Cinema Luneta

Showings of standards and emergent films of Philippine cinema at the Rizal Park. Organized by the NCCA National Committee on the Cinema and Film Academy of the Philippines.

Sayaw Pinoy 2006

A national dance tour showcasing various forms—folk, modern, ballet, and contemporary. Organized by the NCCA National Committee on Dance.

Ani ng Panitik

The event consists of "Textula" (poetry writing through SMS technology) in Cebu, Iloilo, Davao and Manila. It also showcases the literary harvest nationwide through literary performances and readings. Organized by the NCCA National Committee on the Literary Arts.

Concert at the Park

A series of dance, music, dramatic and literary performances at the Rizal Park.

Sining Gising

Cultural discussions on the air every Sunday, 1-2:30 p.m., NBN-4 Radyo ng Bayan.

Kalahi Cultural Caregiving for Vulnerable Groups and Overseas Pinoys

Artistic and cultural services of the NCCA outreach program.

Saganang Ani

From 6 p.m. of Feb. 26 to 6 a.m. of Feb. 27 at the Baywalk, Roxas Blvd., a harvest of musical forms—choral music, bamboo ensemble, piano, rondalla—from Kalinga, Iloilo, Davao and Manila closes the National Arts Month.

Call NCCA at 5272192 loc. 507 to 509 or visit www.ncca.gov.ph

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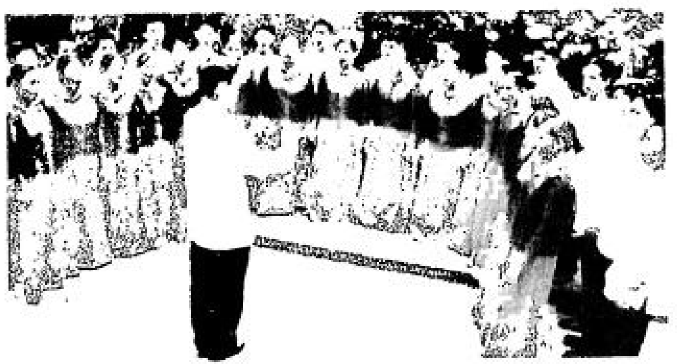


NAMCYA 2005 Youth Choir first prize winner: Ramon Magsaysay High School Chorale (NCR)

Arts take . . .

From page C1

M. de Leon Jr.

And he and Alvarez indicated this will have a bearing on the month's festivities, "Ani ng Sining 2006," which celebrates "a bountiful harvest in the arts."

The event is a project of the NCCA in coordination with Tulungan Foundation, National Parks Development Committee, and the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Things get to a lively start on Feb. 4-5 at the Luneta (Rizal Park, Manila) with performances from groups representing the different art forms.

There are many individuals and groups, professional and school-based, who will participate in the month-long festivities, including popular folk singer Noel Cabangon, Diwa de Leon's Makiling Ensemble and the award-winning Ramon Magsaysay High School Chorale.

NOEL Cabangon

The focus is not just Manila but nationwide. There will be art festivals, dances, *balagtasan* (poetic jousts), concerts, film showings, games and competitions, forums, book launchings, plays.

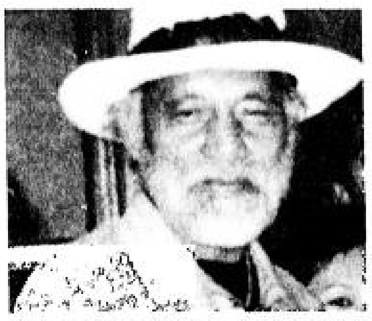
Among the participating provinces, cities and towns are Laoag (Ilocos Norte), Tuguegarao (Cagayan), Sorsogon, Los Baños, Laguna, Calbayog (Samar), Iloilo, Tacloban, Bacolod and Sagay (Negros Occidental), Cagayan de Oro and Bukidnon.

The thrust is toward Filipino excellence in the arts, be it national, regional or indigenous.

The celebrations will end on Feb. 26 with a multi-band performance from sunset to sunrise at Baywalk, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

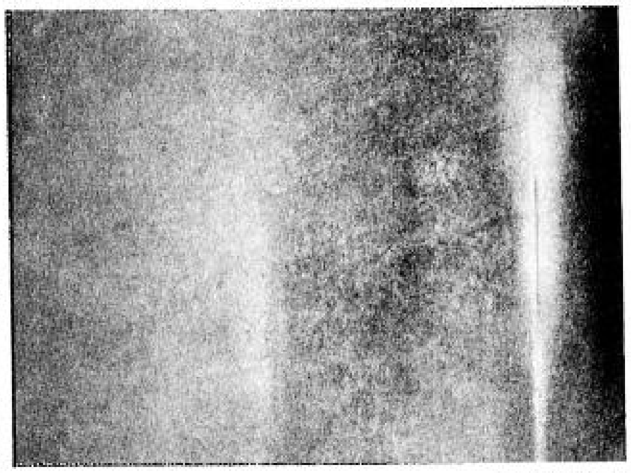
Truly, February is an important month as we celebrate the arts, rediscover love, and remember the glories and sorrows of the past.

VISUAL ARTS



Tam Austria sessions in Antipolo

TAM Austria will hold his annual public sketching session on Feb. 5 at his home in Antipolo. He will interact with colleagues and patrons. Beneficiary is the Philippine Institute of the Deaf. Call 0917-89112658 or 6305473.



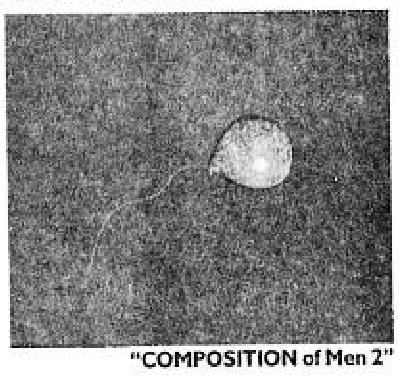
"RED Earth"

Ramirez at Global City

LEYTE-BORN Fred Ramirez presents his crimson explorations and other abstractions, "Fred in Red," on Feb. 9 at One McKinley Place (26th St., Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City). The works can also be viewed on Feb. 11-20 at Choice Expression Gallery (2/F, Doña Consolacion Bldg., 122 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati). Call 8990717 and 8990718.

Jocson at Astra

MULTIMEDIA artist Jethro Jocson's "Life" will open in Galeria Astra (LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. [formerly Reposo St.], Makati) . The show consists of paintings, sound art, installations and performances on the joy of living. Call 8903988 and 7243032.



"COMPOSITION of Men 2"

Aguilar and Soliven at Mag:Net

ALEX Aguilar and Nolet Soliven reunite anew in "Luci the Gnat," opening in Mag:Net at The Loop (ABS-CBN, Quezon City) on Feb. 2. The title is a cryptic code that has sealed their friendship for years. Both are enamored with painting figures. Call 4100995.

Sena workshop

THE F.B. Sena art workshop will present the one-woman show of Crisanta de Guzman, an 80-year-old student of Sena, Jan. 31-Feb. 14, at the Triumph Building, Quezon Avenue, QC. De Guzman will exhibit her pastel, watercolor, acrylic and oil paintings of varied subjects.

Pottery exhibit

ART INFORMAL holds its first Pottery Students Exhibit until Feb. 4. The exhibit features some of the best student works in terra cotta and stoneware. Participating are Camille Zaldriaga, Anna Varona, RR Ropan, Stephanie Haw, Abi Jao, Belen Razo, Ruthie Maye Padilla, Jo Lim, Olive Ong, Lorna Belen, Kate Lee, Bong Zamora and Lorelie So. Art Informal offers pottery classes on weekdays and Saturdays. Call 7258518.

Caasi at Shang

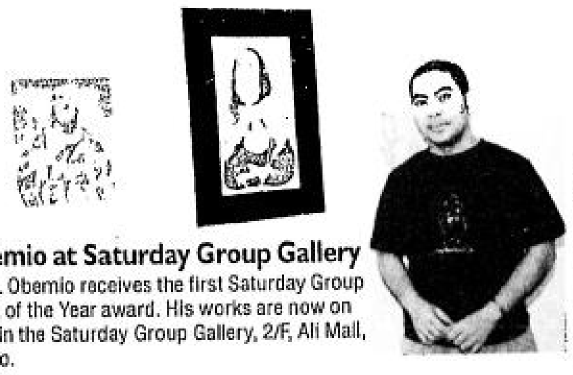
Young abstractionist Ruel Caasi presents "Recent Works," until Feb. 28, at the Frio Mixx-Shang Arts Space, Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Caasi's canvases play with 3-4 tones applied on the ground in the form of brush marks, geometric shapes and color fields. In addition to industrial paint, Caasi also introduces drawing marks in graphite that highlights comparative differences in material and technique. Call 6327921.

Photo lighting workshop

THE ALCOVE Photo Gallery will conduct a Primer on Lighting workshop by Jay Alonzo on Feb. 11, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Avenue, Ayala Triangle, Makati. The workshop is a pioneering course in the local photography scene and is dedicated solely to the discussion of lighting concepts and techniques. Workshop fee is P1,800 (inclusive of film, handouts, workshop equipment, lunch and certificate). Limited slots. Call 8921801.

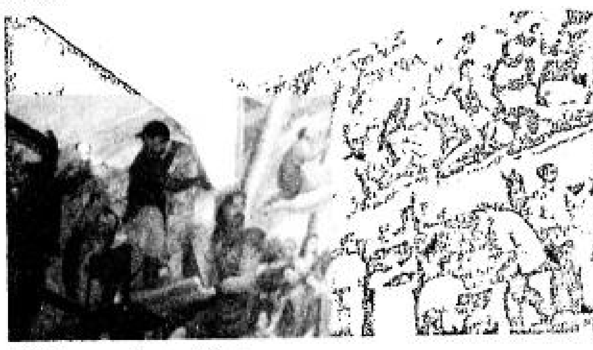
Basic museology

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM will conduct a three-week Training on Basic Museology, May 9-26, at the National Museum, Main Building, P. Burgos St., Ermita, Manila. The course focuses on the different phases of museum work and is open to museum and cultural workers, museum enthusiasts and professionals. Call 5270278.



Obemio at Saturday Group Gallery

ROEL Obemio receives the first Saturday Group Artist of the Year award. His works are now on view in the Saturday Group Gallery, 2/F, Ali Mall, Cubao.



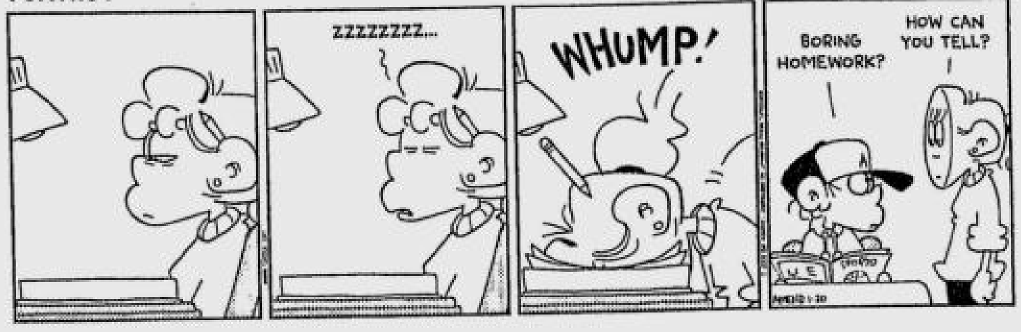
UST mural unveiling

A WORKER spruces up one of the three new murals depicting the history of law from the biblical times to the present. The mural, by Danilo Santiago, graces the lobby of the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Civil Law, the oldest law school in the Philippines. It will be formally unveiled today at 4 p.m. by President Macapagal-Arroyo and UST Rector Magnificus Fr. Tamerlane Lana, O.P., in connection with the 396th anniversary of UST, Asia's oldest university.

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

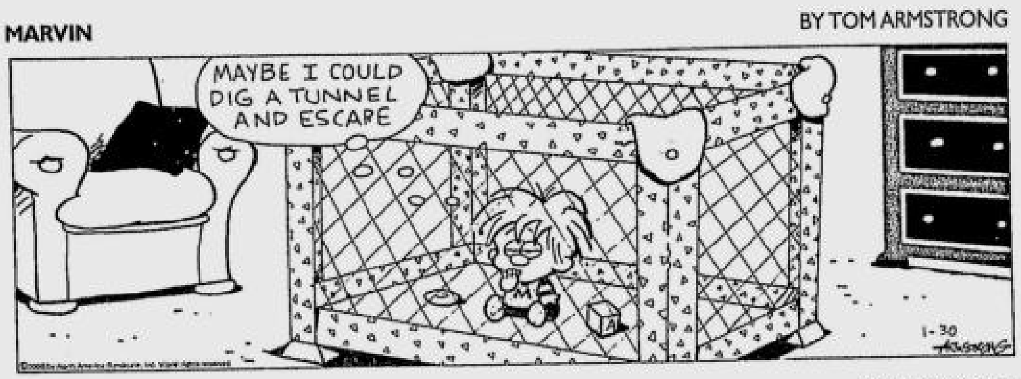
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


ZZZZZZZZ...
WHUMP!
BORING HOMEWORK?
HOW CAN YOU TELL?

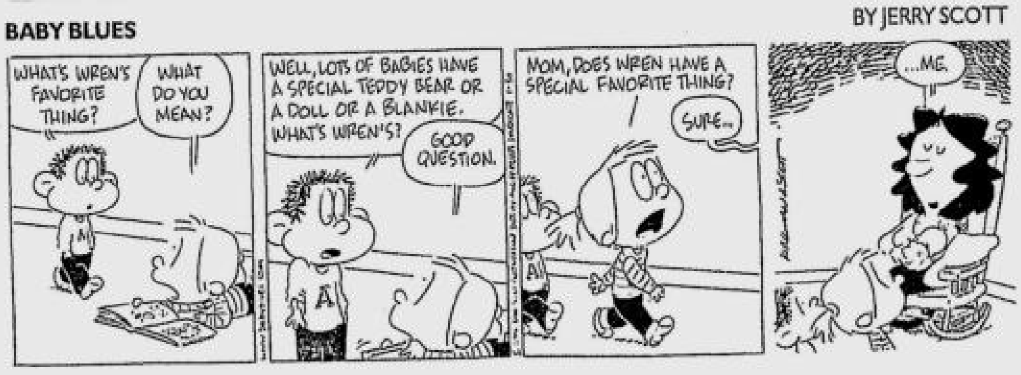
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MAYBE I COULD DIG A TUNNEL AND ESCAPE
1-30

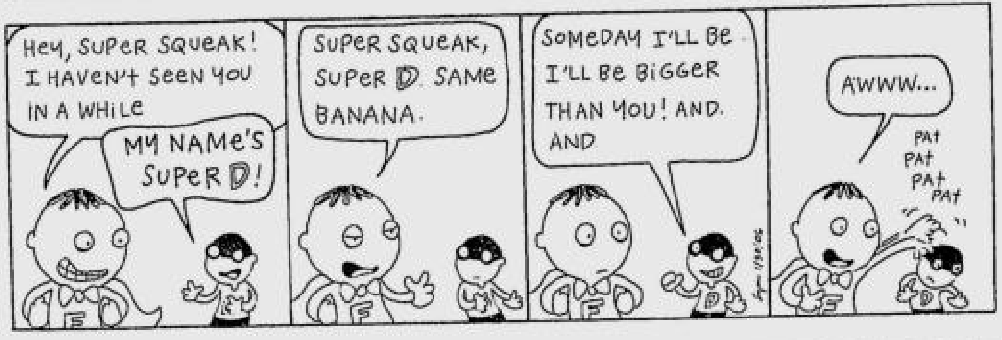
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S WREN'S FAVORITE THING?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WELL, LOTS OF BABIES HAVE A SPECIAL TEDDY BEAR OR A DOLL OR A BLANKIE. WHAT'S WREN'S?
GOOD QUESTION.
MOM, DOES WREN HAVE A SPECIAL FAVORITE THING?
SURE...
...ME.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, SUPER SQUEAK! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A WHILE
MY NAME'S SUPER D!
SUPER SQUEAK, SUPER D. SAME BANANA.
SOMEDAY I'LL BE I'LL BE BIGGER THAN YOU! AND. AND
AWWW...
PAT PAT PAT PAT

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Even if you think you aren't, you're actually quite organized and on top of your scene. You're intelligent, and you're very aware of social issues. You want to make a difference in the world. You have good judgment, and when you care about something, you're highly persuasive! In the year ahead, an important decision will arise. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Vanessa Redgrave, actress; Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd US president; Phil Collins, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Yesterday's New Moon made you think about friendships. Today you're wondering what your true feelings are for others, and vice versa.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If you have any sense of destiny for yourself, what is it? What do you want others to think or say about you after you're gone? What qualities do you want respect for?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel a need to understand more about the world, especially cultures and countries that are different from yours. After all, we're all in this Big Soup together.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Something or someone will make you think very deeply about your values today. Never underestimate the importance of kindness in your daily life.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Deep-rooted feelings you have about partnerships and close friendships could surface today. Try to understand these. If you don't, you're driving in the dark.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You have a strong urge to clean up certain areas of your life. Get rid of garbage and clutter. Recycle, give away or sell what you no longer use.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's easy to focus on improving children when we really should focus on improving ourselves. Don't fool yourself about this today. It's time to look in the mirror.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is the perfect day to clean up garbage and unneeded or unwanted items at home. Clean up laundry areas, and everything to do with the plumbing and storage.

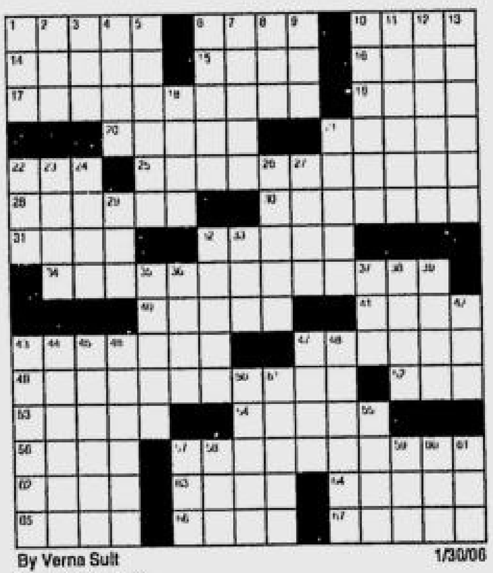
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Take a moment to scrutinize your feelings for siblings, neighbors and relatives. Don't just gloss over things. These people are in your life. What are your feelings for them?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Make friends with your financial situation. Don't live in the dark about it. Find out what you own and what you owe. Get facts and figures.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Think about how you can improve your health by losing weight or cutting back on some harmful habits. (It's easier to stop a bad habit than it is to start a good one.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): If you feel vaguely worried about something, make a worry list. Bring your fuzzy, doubtful thoughts out into the open. Then you can deal with them!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Verna Suit
Silver Spring, MD
1/30/06

ACROSS
1 Actor Jimmy
6 Intervening space: abbr.
10 Marine vessel
14 German sub
15 "Exodus" author
16 Skiers' ride
17 1775 rider
19 City near Utica
20 Compare
21 Toothed strips
22 Tokyo, formerly
25 Potter's bunny
28 Military forces
30 "The Bald Soprano" playwright
31 "The Wind in the Willows" character
32 Words to live by
34 Mr. Grace Kelly?
40 Alan and Cheryl
41 Goose's gullet
43 Begin, for one
47 Fanning of "Man on Fire"
49 Almanac name
52 Male or female
53 Markey and Bagnold
54 Mountain nymph
56 Porter of notes
57 "Goodbye, Columbus" writer
62 Solemn last word
63 Singer Feliciano
64 __ firma
65 Heels
66 Wimbledon units
67 Tasty tidbit

DOWN
1 Dino
2 Wharton School deg.
3 Promissory note
4 Statuesque
5 Band of color
6 Quilt with a washable cover
7 Dancing Castle
8 Man with a title
9 Half a fly?
10 Disco blinker
11 Some WMDs
12 __ pentameter
13 Voila!
18 Stretches (out)
21 Copier brand
22 Dine
23 Rain unit
24 Actor Epps
26 Coolidge and Wilson
27 French roast
29 Evil Amin
32 Army doc
33 California fort
35 Rods and Cards
36 Colombian city
37 Yuck!
38 Cupid
39 Cost per unit
42 Paraffin
43 Medicine that induces vomiting
44 Napa neighbor
45 Stirred up
46 Eve and Elizabeth
47 German three
48 Adjusts to fit
50 Lift up
51 City in Provence
55 Barrymore or Carey
57 Slumber suits, briefly
58 Clod chopper
59 Lode load
60 Three in Italia
61 Derby or Homburg

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

C	O	W	E	R	E	D	■	S	C	H	I	S	M	S
A	B	A	L	O	N	E	■	U	R	A	N	I	A	N
R	E	S	L	O	T	S	■	S	A	V	A	N	N	A
C	R	T	■	T	I	C	■	A	B	E	■	G	A	R
A	L	A	S	■	T	E	E	N	■	N	O	L	T	E
S	I	G	H	T	I	N	G	■	■	■	S	E	E	R
S	N	F	F	R	E	D	A	I	■	U	A	S	F	S
■	■	■	■	U	S	E	L	E	S	S	■	■	■	■
S	H	O	O	K	■	D	I	A	P	H	R	A	G	M
T	E	A	R	■	■	■	T	R	E	A	S	U	R	E
K	A	R	A	I	■	L	E	S	E	■	A	R	A	N
I	V	S	■	U	S	O	■	I	D	S	■	E	N	D
T	E	M	P	T	E	D	■	N	E	W	G	A	T	E
T	H	E	A	T	R	E	■	T	R	A	I	T	O	R
S	O	N	N	I	E	S	■	O	S	T	L	E	R	S

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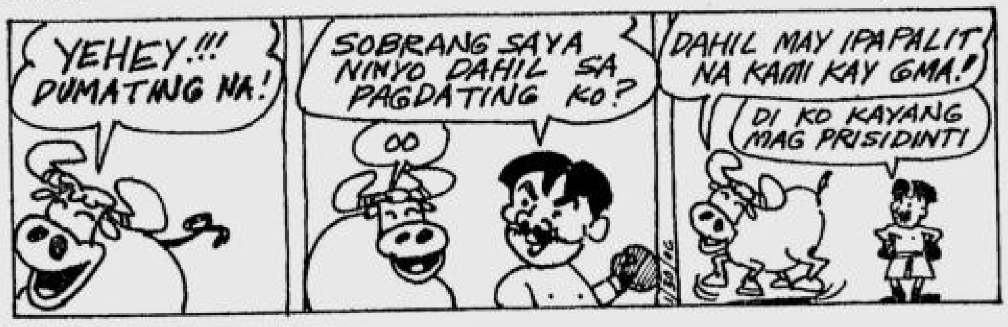
1/30/06

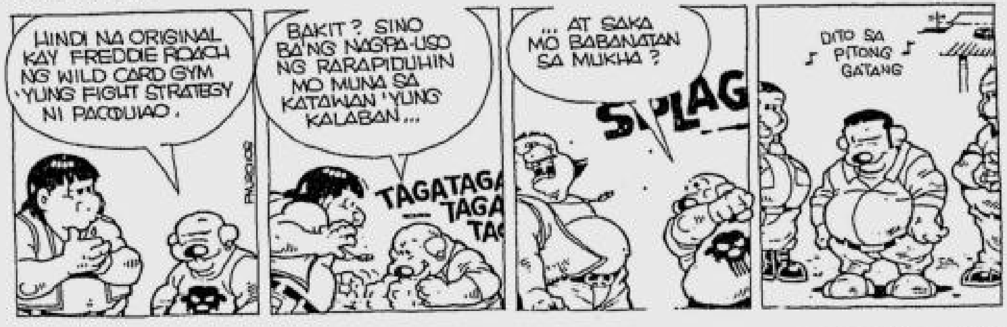
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


YEHEY!!! DUMATING NA!
SOBRANG SAYA NINYO DAHIL SA PAGDATING KO?
OO
DAHIL MAY IPAPALIT NA KAMI KAY GMA!
DI KO KAYANG MAG PRISIDINTI

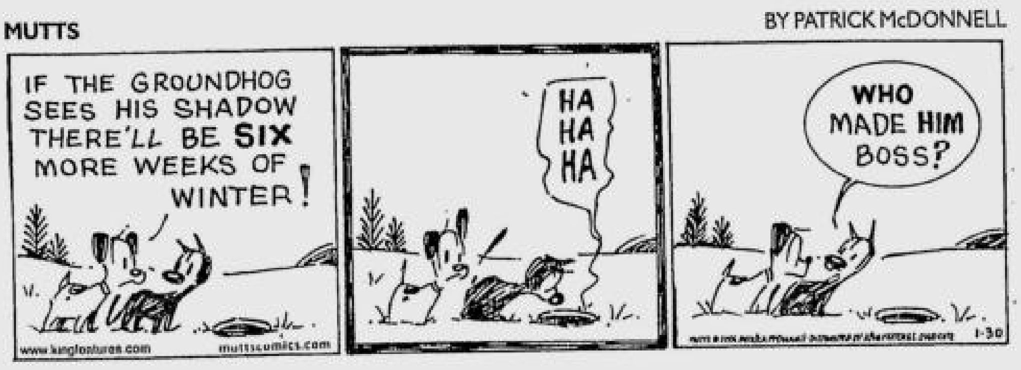
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HINDI NA ORIGINAL KAY FREDDIE ROACH NG WILD CARD GYM 'YUNG FIGHT STRATEGY NI PACQUIAO.
BAKIT? SINO BA'NG NAGPA-USO NG RARAPIDUHIN MO MUNA SA KATAWAN 'YUNG KALABAN...
TAGATAGA TAGA TAG
...AT SAKA MO BABANATAN SA MUKHA?
SPLAG
DITO SA PITONG GATANG

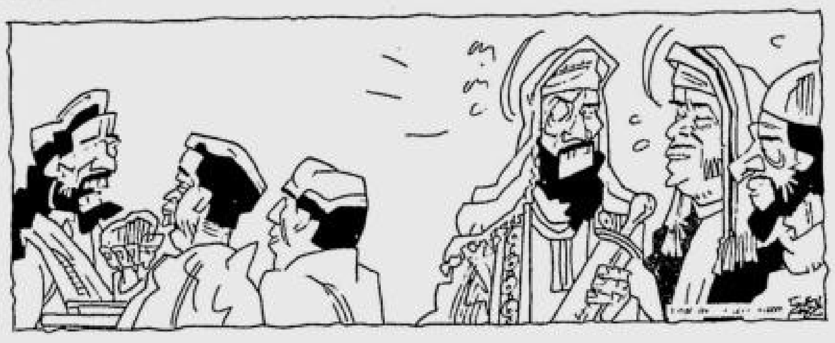
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


IF THE GROUNDHOG SEES HIS SHADOW THERE'LL BE SIX MORE WEEKS OF WINTER!
HA HA HA
WHO MADE HIM BOSS?
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
1-30

DIVINE COMEDY

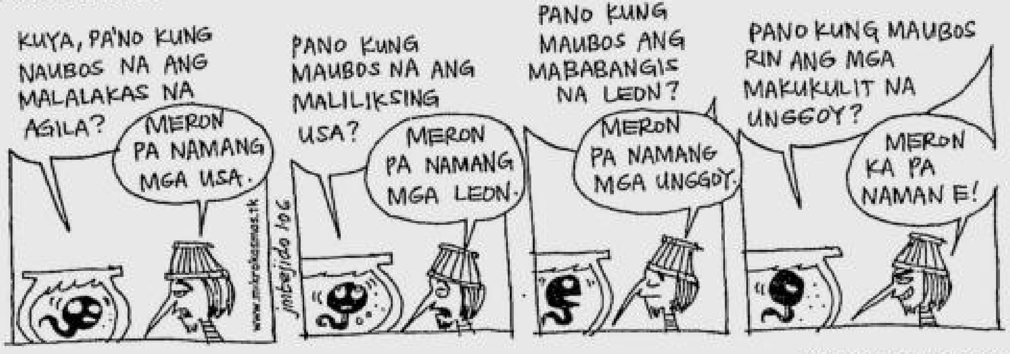
BY STEVEN PABALINAS



TUMAAS NA NAMAN ANG KILAY NG MGA PHARISEES NANG NAKITA NILANG KUMAKAIN SI JESUS CHRIST KASAMA ANG MGA BADING

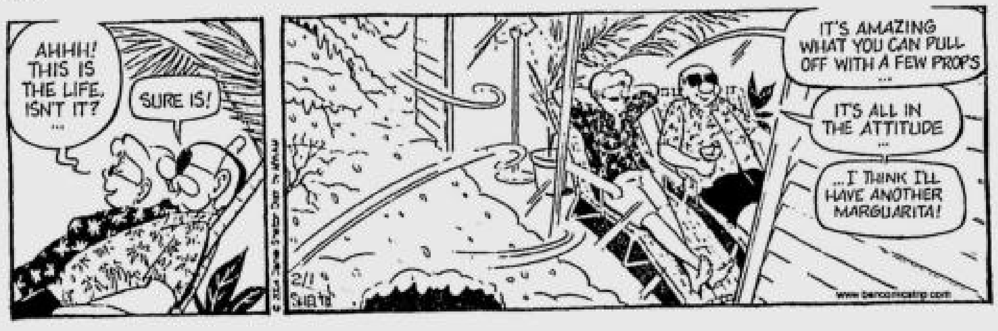
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KUYA, PA'NO KUNG NAUBOS NA ANG MALALAKAS NA AGILA?
MERON PA NAMANG MGA USA.
PANO KUNG MAUBOS NA ANG MALILIKSING USA?
MERON PA NAMANG MGA LEON.
PANO KUNG MAUBOS ANG MABABANGIS NA LEON?
MERON PA NAMANG MGA UNGGOY.
PANO KUNG MAUBOS RIN ANG MGA MAKUKULIT NA UNGGOY?
MERON KA PA NAMAN E!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
jmtejido 106

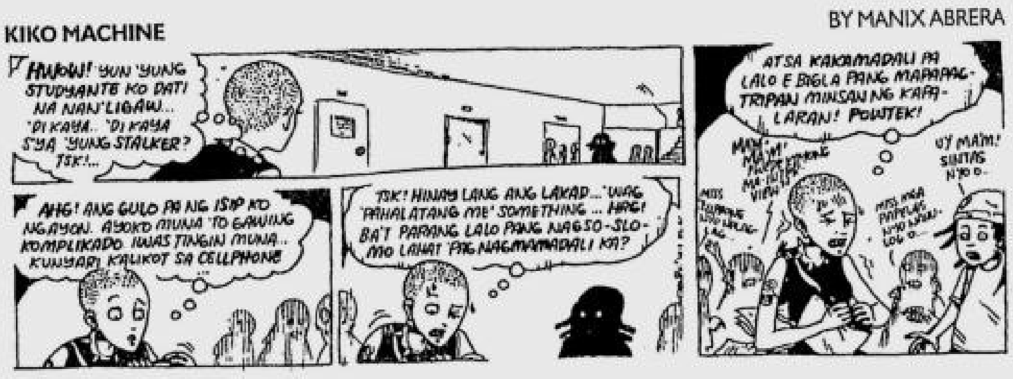
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


AHHH! THIS IS THE LIFE, ISN'T IT? ...
SURE IS!
IT'S AMAZING WHAT YOU CAN PULL OFF WITH A FEW PROPS ...
IT'S ALL IN THE ATTITUDE ...
...I THINK I'LL HAVE ANOTHER MARGUARITA!
www.bencomicstrip.com

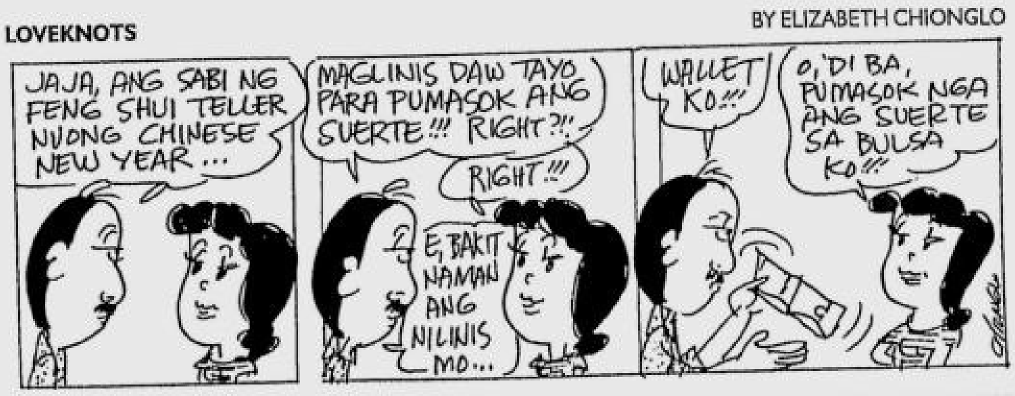
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HUWAW! YUN 'YUNG STUDYANTE KO DATI NA NAN'LIGAW... 'DI KAYA.. 'DI KAYA S'YA 'YUNG STALKER? TSK!...
AHG! ANG GULO PA NG ISIP KO NGAYON. AYOKO MUNA 'TO GAWING KOMPLIKADO. IWAS TINGIN MUNA... KUNYARI KALIKOT SA CELLPHONE
TSK! HINAY LANG ANG LAKAD... 'WAG 'PAHALATANG ME' SOMETHING... HAG! BA'T PARANG LALO PANG NAGSO-SLO-MO LAHAT 'PAG NAGMAMADALI KA?
ATSA KAKAMADALI PA LALO E BIGLA PANG MAPAPAG-TRIPAN MINSAN NG KAPA-LARAN! POWTEK!
UY MA'M! SINTAS N'YO O..

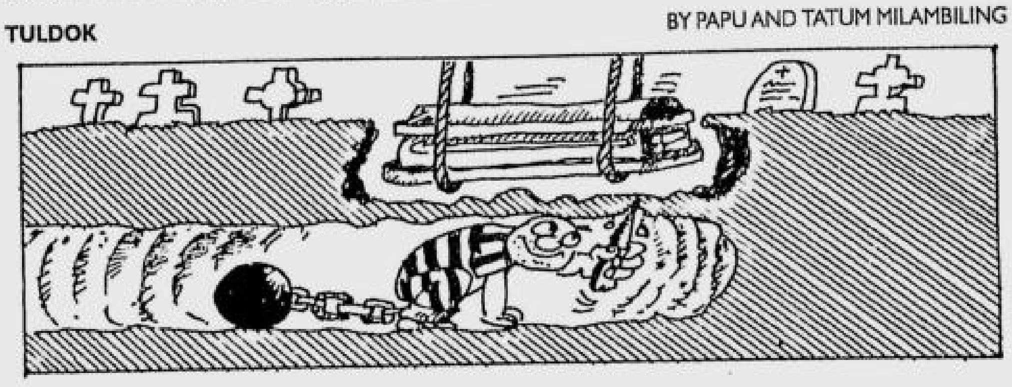
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, ANG SABI NG FENG SHUI TELLER NUONG CHINESE NEW YEAR...
MAGLINIS DAW TAYO PARA PUMASOK ANG SUERTE!!! RIGHT?!!
RIGHT!!!
E, BAKIT NAMAN ANG NILINIS MO...
WALLET KO!!!
O, 'DI BA, PUMASOK NGA ANG SUERTE SA BULSA KO!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



HOW HAS A BOOK CHANGED MY LIFE?

Neverending fatherhood

"The Neverending Story" by Michael Ende

By José Leo Lemuel G. Caparas Jr.

"THE NEVERENDING STORY" TAUGHT me never to judge a book by its movie. It is more than just saving the world of Fantastica. It is about a son's search for his father's affection.

I feel deeply for this quest since my son, José Ma. (6 years old), and I are forced to live apart. The book reminds me not to fall short of my fatherly duties.

The surreal cast in Fantastica brings to mind the people who grant me visitation rights. The time given to me and my son is too short. Planning to spend it well seems neverending.

There is hope, though. Recently, my son asked me to keep repeating a corny joke. He laughed so much that he threw up. I took a deep sigh, looked into his face, and smiled.

I told him, "I love you, *anak*." He did the same.

José Leo Lemuel G. Caparas Jr., 35, is an economist.

Get a chance to win P3,000 PowerBooks gift certificates and be featured in the INQUIRER's pages by writing about the power of reading. For contest mechanics, log on to www.powerbooks.com.ph. The contest is held in connection with the Philippine Daily Inquirer's 20th anniversary.

100-BOOK SPREE!

JOSÉ Caparas Jr.

NOVEL OF THE MONTH

Marilynne Robinson, widely regarded as one of America's best contemporary writers, is the author of the novel "Housekeeping" (1981), the PowerBooks book of the month that tells the haunting story of two girls growing up in rural Idaho in the mid-1900s. Steeped in images of the Northwest's landscape, the work reflects Robinson's knowledge of and concern for the natural world and addresses themes of loss, survival, transience, and coming-of-age. The novel received the PEN/Hemingway award for best first novel and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. PowerBooks is at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (638-0023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334/ 5243448).

Lumbera launches new collection of critical essays

RENOWNED CRITIC BIENVENIDO L. Lumbera launches his newest book, an anthology of critical essays in Filipino, "Bayan at Lipunan: Ang Kritisismo ni Bienvenido L. Lumbera," today, 3:30 p.m., at the Pulungang Recto, Bulwagang Rizal, College of Arts and Letters, UP Diliman.

Published by the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, the book is edited by Dr. Rosario Torres Yu.

The launching will be followed by the alumni homecoming party of the UP Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature, which is marking its 40th anniversary.

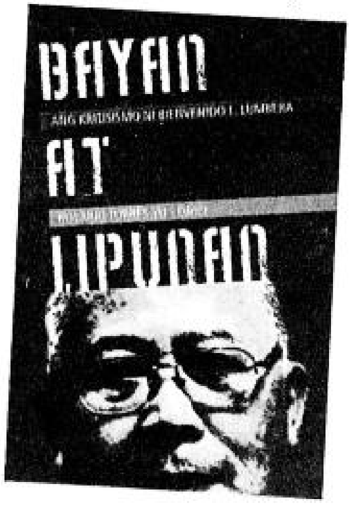
The essays are the result of more than three decades of rigorous thinking on the relationship of culture, particularly literature, and the concept of nation.

Academics and students, as well as readers interested in knowing about their Filipino identity, will be enlightened by the lucid writing and engaging insights of Lumbera, who is considered a pioneer in the nationalist discourse in Philippine studies.

Aside from being a critic, Lumbera is a poet and librettist who combines lyricism and social commentary. He has written memorable Filipino musical/dance dramas such as "Tales of the Manuvu," "Rama Hari," and "Bayani."

He received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Literature, Journalism and Creative Communication in 1993.

Call 9244899.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Mag reads

IN THE NEWEST ISSUE OF METRO HOME, art collectors share their secrets on finding wise art investments. From betting on Bulol to collecting movie posters, Metro Home helps you figure out if it's treasure or trash.

Readers can take a peek at the newest condominium complex, the St. Francis Towers, and learn affordable home redecorating tips from designers Ito Kish and Dan Lichauco.

MetroActive maps out convenient jogging trails at the heart of the city's business districts.

With NBA star LeBron James on the cover, MetroActive also features a coverage of last year's Shanghai Grand Prix, a profile of Fil-Am boxer Brian Viloria, top-notch adventure pieces on Palawan and Australia's Great Barrier Reef, and a review of the best soccer shoes sold in local stores.

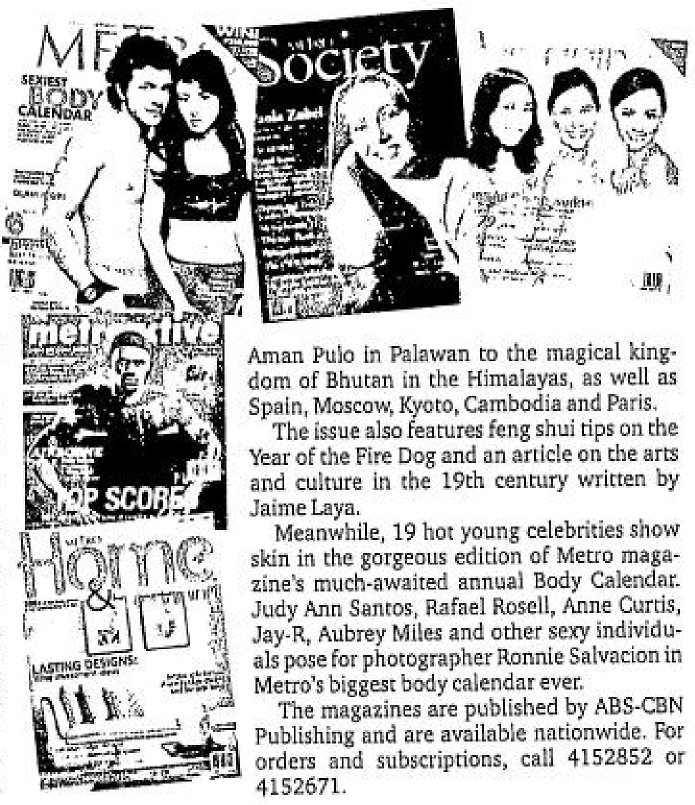
Metro Weddings gives tips to would-be brides on searching for the perfect gown designer. In addition to a complete listing of the country's top hair and makeup artists and fashion designers, Metro Weddings features couture grandmasters Inno Sotto, Pitoy Moreno, Ben Farrales and Auggie Cordero.

Paola Zobel is on the cover of Metro Society, which features prime travel places, from Aman Pulo in Palawan to the magical kingdom of Bhutan in the Himalayas, as well as Spain, Moscow, Kyoto, Cambodia and Paris.

The issue also features feng shui tips on the Year of the Fire Dog and an article on the arts and culture in the 19th century written by Jaime Laya.

Meanwhile, 19 hot young celebrities show skin in the gorgeous edition of Metro magazine's much-awaited annual Body Calendar. Judy Ann Santos, Rafael Rosell, Anne Curtis, Jay-R, Aubrey Miles and other sexy individuals pose for photographer Ronnie Salvacion in Metro's biggest body calendar ever.

The magazines are published by ABS-CBN Publishing and are available nationwide. For orders and subscriptions, call 4152852 or 4152671.


SEXIEST BODY CALENDAR
Society
SCORE
Home
LASTING DESIGNS

Tribute to Edades, Ang, Navarro, Rivera

THE EXHIBIT "KUATRO: PILLARS OF the Visual Arts in the University of Santo Tomas" will open tomorrow at 6 p.m. at the UST Beato Angelico Gallery.

Organized by the UST College of Fine Arts and Design and UST Center for Intercultural Studies, the exhibit surveys the life and works of National Artists for the Visual Arts Victorio Edades, Ang Kiukok and J. Elizalde Navarro, and Prof. Cenon Rivera. The exhibit will run until Feb. 18.

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Islander

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GANTIMPALA Theater's "The Queen's Jewel," adapted for the stage from the original short story by Nick Joaquin and presented as a twin-bill production with F. Sionil José's "The God Stealer"

CALL-CENTER CRAZE SATIRIZED

'Hello! Is this me calling?'

By Gibbs Cadiz

THE FIRST GREAT STAGE performance of the year went by in a blur—two weekends, to be exact—but it was with the kind of blazing glory that would harm justice as we know it if it went unreported.

Tremendous is the calmest word to describe Eugene Domingo in Chris Martinez's "Welcome to IntelStar," half of the double-bill program recently served up by Tanghalang Pilipino at the CCP (the other half was J. Dennis Teodosio's "Geegee at Waterina").

Not a few know Domingo only as the crass, manipulative Simang in the defunct telenovela "Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan." In "IntelStar," she ditched the dowdy threads and barnyard cackle, poured herself into a smart navy-blue corporate suit, and became Chelsea, the hotshot training manager of a top-rank call center

HELLO!/ D4

Chris Martinez's perceptive play, 'Welcome to IntelStar,' kickstarts the year on a superior note

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Venue: Astoria Plaza Hotel, Ortigas Drive, Pasig City
Date: Feb. 5, Sunday, 8 AM - 1 PM. Free Lunch & Certificate.

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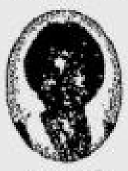
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Michael Cruz
Area Sales Director
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Mart Instrella
Area Sales Director
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Elenita Viaña
Branch Manager
Challengers Division

Virgelia Reyes
Branch Manager
Super Achievers Division

Honorio Rocha
Branch Manager
Super Achievers Division

Luciana Lumang
Branch Manager
Golden Peak Division

Florence Instrella
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Jaguars Division

Marjorie Instrella
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Melody Instrella
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Mildred Chua
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'Hello! Is this me calling?'

From page D1

whose job it was to teach new recruits (the audience, actually, as her PowerPoint presentation was the entire play) to become virtual Americans through tectonic shifts in accents, mindsets and body clocks.

"'Could you?' is not 'Kud yu?'" she barked in her impeccable neutral accent. "It's... 'Cujoo?'"

Spoken with the steam-rolling self-assurance of a pro, the line was a perfect mirror to the farcical depths the call-center business may unwittingly dunk its practitioners into.

For some, despite the high pay and perks, there's something about living on a borrowed nationality and time zone—about remaking the way you sound to assure that Kansas redneck on the other line that he's not, in fact, talking to a freaking Asian—that can stir up questions of identity, inner exile, alienation.

If your job essentially requires you to deny who you are, is it worth it in the long run?

Martinez's snug treatise on this subject shimmered with layers of wit and unexpected implications. These days, irony is employed as no more than attitude. "IntelStar" deployed it with finesse, not as a pose but as an expression of curiosity, such that something as ordinary as an orientation program became a minefield of the most provocative absurdities.

Along with Simang's sensational turn, this fresh, perceptive work has the distinction of kickstarting the year on a superior note.

Ornate

Teodosio's "Geegee at Waterina," directed by Roobak Valle, filtered assumptions of destiny and identity through a more ornate prism. The real-life travails of Walterina Markova the comfort gay and his handler-friend Justo to Justo became the basis for a play that attempted to weigh the substance of a life lived on the fringes.

Playing the title characters were Paolo Cabañero and Lou Veloso, who tore into a wordy, generous script brimming with gayspeak.

"Geegee at Waterina" had nothing new to say about either gayness or the lust for life that many of its denizens celebrated in extremis. What it had was a bottomless armory of one-liners that Veloso and Cabañero gleefully lobbed at each other at every turn, making for an extended laughfest.

The pair had admirable rapport, to be sure, and between them they created a humane picture of a conflicted friendship. As Waterina, Veloso was in particularly fine form, his every wisecrack a wellspring of pain and pathos.

His big moment, though—the heart of the play, in fact—when he would ransack himself and find a soul unbowed by adversity, came only near the end of a rather distended dramatic arc. Unrestrained skirmishing had made "Geegee at Waterina" flabbier, more long-winded than was called for.

For a play in search of meaning in a tumultuous life, greater self-reflection would not be a bad thing.

Pillage

Questions of identity and self-regard also coursed through Gantimpala Theater Foundation's twin-bill production of F. Sionil José's "The God Stealer" and Nick Joaquin's "The Queen's Jewel," both short stories adapted for the stage by José Victor Torres and directed by Tony Espejo.

In "The God Stealer," Philip Latak (Joel Molina) is a citified Ifugao who steals a *bulol* (rice god) from his tribe as a favor to his American friend, Sam Christie (Roeder Camañag). Latak's grandfather dies of heartbreak at this act of pillage, and Latak, repentant, reembraces his tribal roots.

EUGENE Domingo, sensational in TP's "Welcome to IntelStar"

A work that seeks to demonstrate the harm done to our native spirit by our everyday cultural apostasy is always welcome. There is no begrudging José for this tale, which throbbed with pride and outrage.

The stage incarnation, though, while alive with indigenous touches, was heavy-handed and oddly distancing—the result of the cast speaking in English, with bits of Ilocano thrown in only for validating effect.

"There are things we can do that won't mean exchanging our souls for it," so went a crucial line in the play. Think how that admonition would stab in a language nearer our own experience. To hear the loin-clothed ensemble enunciate their characters' patter without much emotional nuance was to understand the play's message of cultural dissociation, but in a way wholly unintended.

Molina and Camañag went through their paces adequately, but it was Dante Balois as Apo Lawingan, Latak's grandfather, who nailed his part with credibility. True, he also spoke in English, but it was coarse, fractured—sounds that came out of him only with seeming contempt. That sense of wariness captured, as the play couldn't, the fragile yet hardy spirit of the Ifugaos.

Entertaining

Joaquin's "The Queen's Jewel" offered Espejo the chance to dabble in lighter, more visually entertaining fare, and he went for it with resourcefulness.

Like "The God Stealer," the play concerned the collision of cultures—in this case, between the pagan beliefs of the natives and the ramrod Catholicism that the Spanish friars were hauling brick by solid brick into the virgin Philippine colony.

As the friars build a church by an old, massive tree, an ancient heathen legend comes alive, complete with a terrifying *babaylan*, an accursed prince and his ladylove, and a giant snake. Only with the Virgin Mary's help can this crisis be solved.

She comes, dazzling in a golden robe, to comfort a soldier-turned-priest (Camañag again, better than in "The God Stealer") who has decided to slay the witch. She lifts her hands to heaven, and a shower of petals falls on the sick priest.

The iconic imagery, fleshed out in life-size scale onstage, was lovely. Magical flourishes like this made "The Queen's Jewel" enjoyable (though, to be sure, casting the *babaylan* as villain was not the best way to teach a high-school audience respect for native tradition).

The cast still spoke in English, but the dissonance was gone. Joaquin's tale, after all, was more fable and fairy tale, its mystical dimensions not particularly rooted to time and place. As a jubilee to our mixed pagan-Christian heritage, it could survive retelling in any language. On the Gantimpala stage, it fairly glittered.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

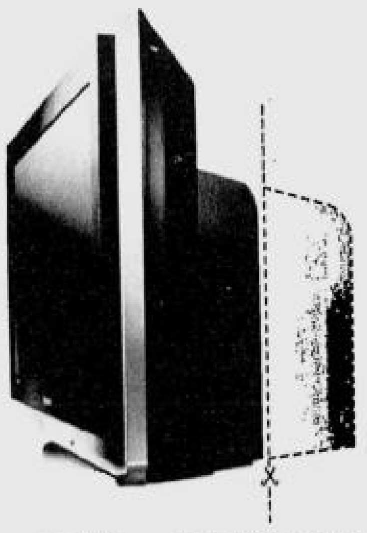
HANGAD singing group

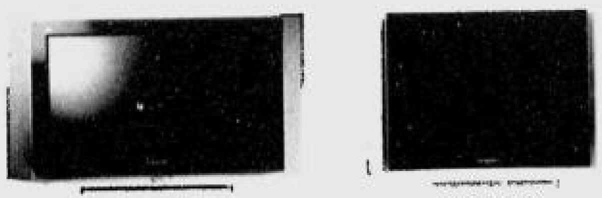
Inspirational concert

THE HANGAD AND THE GAWAD KALINGA Prayer Mountain community will hold the concert of liturgical and inspirational songs, "Stand up for Love," on Feb. 5, 6 p.m., at St. Joseph's Theater, La Salle Greenhills.

The concert aims to raise funds for the educational programs of the Prayer Mountain site in Antipolo by the Gawad Kalinga Bayanihan Brigade.

Hangad is an inspirational singing group. Under the Jesuit Music Ministry of the Jesuit Communications Foundation, the group has released four albums: "Hangad" (cassette in 1998; CD in 2000), "Hangad Acapella!" (2002), "Pasko Naming Hangad" (2002) and "The Easter Journey" (2005). The group has been nominated for the Awit Awards and Catholic Mass Media Awards.





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